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TRANSIENT MEN AND SKID ROW: AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL

AGENCY PROGRAMS IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA

by



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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Transient Men and Skid Row: An Analysis of Social Agency Programs in Edmonton, Alberta" submitted by Geoffrey Eaton Milligan in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploratory study of the social condition of the transient men in Edmonton's skid row district, commonly known as the Boyle Street area. The study focuses on the historical conditions which have led to the development of the skid row area in other cities and an examination of facilities servicing the need of the skid row sectors in the City of Edmonton. The thesis is based on four months of research in the Boyle Street area as a participant observer, and on library research into studies of skid row sections in other cities.

The findings of this study indicate that although considerable statistical information has been gathered on skid row in other cities little actual statistical information is available with regard to the skid row section in the City of Edmonton. Furthermore although much information seems to be available on proposed solution to problems that exist on skid row, considerable research into the social aspects of the problem are necessary before any proposed solutions to the problem can be implemented.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I:	INTRODUCTION - A Perspective on Skid Row	1
	A Definition of Homelessness	1
	The Skid Row Setting	3
	The Skid Row Life.	5
	The Skid Row Stereotype	7
	A Historical Perspective	9
	Pre 1900	10
	The Golden Age	15
	1920-1939 - Hard Times	19
	Post 1940 - A Further Decline As The Homeless Were Absorbed Into Industry	20
	The Canada Experience	21
CHAPTER II:	METHODOLOGY	30
	Introduction Into the Area	31
	Gaining Rapport With Data Sources	32
	Problems of Validity and Reliability	32
	Data Collection and Data Sources	34
	Participant Observation	34
	Key Informant Technique	35
	Field Diary	35
	Agency Files and Public Relations Material	35
	Statistical Studies and Formal Interviews	36

CHAPTER III:	EDMONTON'S SKID ROW	37
	The Location	37
	The Problem	38
	An Illustration	40
	Comments and Summary	48
CHAPTER IV:	INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES IN THE BOYLE STREET AREA	51
	Institutions and Agencies Servicing the Basic Needs	52
	Salvation Army	52
	Provincial Single Men's Hostel	54
	Marian Centre	55
	The Edmonton Day Centre	56
	Bissel Centre	57
	Hope Mission	58
	Health Needs	59
	Employment Needs	62
	Private Companies	63
	Canada Manpower	67
	Temporary Employment Agencies	73
	Social Agency Employment Activity	83
	Summary and Evaluation	85
CHAPTER V:	AN EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF COMMUNITY WORKERS ON EDMONTON'S SKID ROW	89
	The Conservative	90
	The Over Identifier	91
	The Helper	93
	The "Other" Type	99

CHAPTER VI:	CURRENT APPROACH ADVOCATED TO MEET THE NEEDS	
	OF THE SINGLE HOMELESS MAN	100
	The Use of Para-Professional Workers	100
	Establishment of a Classification Centre	108
	Introduction of a Multi-Service Delivery System	118
	Initiation of the Community Development Process	121
	An Example	126
CHAPTER VII:	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	134
	Historical Perspective	134
	Methodology	136
	The Present	137
	Concluding Statement	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY		140
APPENDIX A, Calendar of Events of Social Agency Activities in		
Edmonton's Skid Row District		145
APPENDIX B, Services Offered by Agencies in Edmonton's Skid		
Row Area, Summer 1969		153

Chapter I

A PERSPECTIVE ON SKID ROW

In recent years a number of significant events in Edmonton's pattern of growth have caused the planners and the people to suddenly become aware that with proper planning and a few lucky breaks in the next few years, the City of Edmonton could grow quite rapidly. Along with this recognition of Edmonton's potential must come recognition that the problems of distant big cities could be our problem too. This thesis is an attempt to shed some light on one of these problems, the transient man and unemployment on Edmonton's Skid Row.

Chapter I is an account of how skid row developed. Hopefully this background will provide the reader with a better understanding of the stereotype characters we tend to associate with the term skid row.

Before proceeding into the historical development of skid row a definition of some of the terms used is in order.

A Definition of Homelessness

As defined by the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences homelessness is:

a condition of detachment from society characterized by the absence or attenuation of the affiliative bonds that link settled persons to a network of inter-connected social structures. Homeless

persons are poor, anomic, inert and non-responsible. They command no resources, enjoy no esteem, and assume no burden of reciprocal obligations.¹

Homelessness cannot be claimed to be a phenomenon unique to skid row or to North America. There have been varying degrees of homelessness throughout history. The most extreme examples are found in the practice of the priesthood of many religions including, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Poverty, detachment from previous affiliation and abandonment of worldly aspirations are the first principles of monasticism. During the middle ages bands of roaming friars, hermits and holy beggars added markedly to the existing numbers of homeless men. The legendary Friar Tuck who took up with Robin Hood and his band of vagabonds and thieves is a case of which we are all familiar. Even today both Christianity and Islam honour the pilgrimage and the retreat which require the devotee to temporarily become homeless, partly for the spiritual benefit and partly to withdraw for a period of time from settled society. Homelessness, the urge to wander and reluctance to establish roots, may not be as much a cause as a symptom of the circumstances which cause people to take up the life on skid row.

The incidence of homelessness seems to be related to the social and economic stability of a society. As will be discussed in a later chapter, social disorganization following major wars and abrupt changes in the economy, such as the stock market collapse in 1929, contributes considerably to an increase in the numbers of homeless people. Changes in the economy usually precipitate change in the social system. These adjustments in this system to accommodate new economic circumstances are

¹International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: The MacMillan Company and The Free Press), p. 494.

rationalized away as the price which has to be paid for progress. Many terms have come to be associated with progress such as industrialization, mobility, urbanization, transition, adjustment, alienation, and so on.

During a period of social adjustment people may be temporarily uprooted from their homes. Job transfers require that people move from one locality to another. Mechanization and cybernetics are often responsible for cutbacks and changes in the composition of the labour force. Retraining, upgrading and promotion may cause members of the labour force to become temporarily homeless while they prepare for a new or a better job. In this process of social adjustment not everyone adapts to new circumstances in the same way.

The success an individual has in adjusting to a new set of circumstances is determined by how closely his behavior coincides with the standards of behavior established by the majority of society. These standards are called norms. Individuals who do not or cannot adjust their behavior to conform to these standards are considered abnormal. Abnormal in this sense may not necessarily be abnormal as perceived by the individual involved.

Homelessness over an extended period of time according to the norms of our society, is considered abnormal by the same reasoning that accumulation of wealth in return for hard work is considered to be a good thing.

The Skid Row Setting

Just as a home in the suburbs next to other wealthy people is the setting in which wealthy people establish their homes, skid row is the setting in which the single homeless man co-exists with other homeless people. The tolerant, loosely organized social order on skid row provides

its inhabitants with a considerable degree of anonymity. Living can be accomplished on a day to day basis without any great pressure to make plans for anything but the immediate future. The variety of services and activities on skid row are suited to meet the needs of the low economic status, unattached male population. Among the facilities offered are a wide range of sleeping facilities, places to eat, easy access to alcohol, temporary jobs, inexpensive clothing outlets and access to the missions and welfare agencies when the homeless man is "down and out."

Skid row is usually located in a highly deteriorated, mixed residential and commercial area, nearly always in an older section of town near the central business district. Besides inexpensive accommodation in cheap hotels and rooming houses, cubicle hotels and hostels operated by government or private welfare agencies, other institutions to be found on skid row include taverns/bars, gambling houses, cheap restaurants and lunch counters, pawn shops and second hand stores, low skilled occupational training colleges, employment offices and religious missions.

The name skid row came from the logging industry. It was taken from a term used to describe the greased log runways down which loggers slid trees into the river - a skid road. The loggers associated the same term with a community of flop houses, saloons, gambling halls, and other institutions which the lumber men frequented whenever they went to town. It is interesting to note that the term suggested a rapid descent and an unstable way of life. The name is probably responsible

for the current notion that the homeless man, the transient, is a person who has fallen from a higher status to his present position because of some vice such as alcohol, gambling or sexual deviance.²

The Skid Row Life

Skid row life was probably never the romantic picture many people make it out to be. A recent book by Allsop, which reconstructs the history of the hobo, and his contribution to America, leaves the reader with no illusions about the very tenuous lease on life of the single homeless men who made up such a large proportion of the labour force around the turn of the century. The following illustration is taken from Allsop's book:

a tramp boarded the train at Cheyenne, climbed to the top of the coach and enjoyed hugely his elegant and rapid manner of making his journey until Sherman was reached. At that point the engineer got a glimpse of him and he at once began throwing a heavy shower of cinders and increased the speed to the utmost power of the engine until the cinders burned into his clothes, cut his arms and legs and face. After cleaving for his life to the rocketing coach, smouldering the while, at Green River he was let down more dead than alive and his hair had turned gray and he looked more like an old man of sixty than a lad of nineteen as he was.³

One of the most complete studies of skid row, carried out by D. J. Bogue (1963) indicates that whatever the attraction to the roving life might have been, the life of a man of skid row is not an enviable one today.

Instead of being a carefree, anarchistic 'seventh Heaven', life for the typical Skid Row resident is boring, insecure, and often lonely. Fear of robbery, worry about where the next meal is coming from, 'alcoholic shakes' from a need of a drink, physical discomfort,

²Kenneth Allsop, Hard Travellin', (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1967), pp. 169-170.

³Allsop, Hard Travellin', p. 103.

shame, despondency and self-hate are daily feelings of these men. Instead of being proudly unfettered, the homeless man suffers perennially degraded status.⁴

The lowest and most degraded status in our Western society can probably be claimed by the skid row alcoholics. The life style they have acquired for survival is not understood by the mainstream of society. These urban nomads do often violate local ordinances that prohibit drunkenness, drinking, begging, sleeping and urinating in public. But what they do is much less significant than who they are. These men serve, caught up by the revolving door, their life sentences on the installment plan because they have been discredited and stigmatized by other Americans.⁵

The proportion of skid row men suffering from chronic alcoholism is not as high as the stereotype would seem to indicate. Only about one third of the men sampled in the Chicago study were confirmed alcoholics. About one man in seven claimed to be a tee totaler.⁶ A pattern of heavy controlled drinking accounts for the remainder.

⁴Donald J. Bogue, Skid Row in American Cities, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 116. This study of 613 men from Chicago's skid row is the most exhaustive, statistical survey conducted into the lives of skid row inhabitants that the writer came across in the literature on skid row. Many urban renewal studies concerned with skid row such as the Greater Philadelphia Movement, quotes extensively from Bogue's study.

⁵James P. Spradley, "The Moral Career of a Bum", *Transaction*, (May, 1970), pp. 62-65. This article is taken from a book by Spradley, *You Owe Yourself a Drink: An Ethnography of Urban Nomads* (Little, Brown and Company, Inc., 1970).

⁶Bogue, Skid Row in American Cities, pp. 90-93. The estimated proportion of drinkers on skid row varies according to definition. Bogue's study estimated that 65% of Chicago's skid row residents have been convicted as drunk but that only 30% - 35% are alcoholics. In a study carried out at the Edmonton Day Centre in 1963, 60% of the men admitted to having a drinking problem. Reverend W. Lindsay Stewart, *The Bright Boys of Skid Row* (Edmonton Day Centre), (Summer 1964), (mimeographed).

Wallace suggests that one of the dominant patterns of the skid row subculture is heavy drinking.⁷ Participation in drinking groups is one of the few forms of social life on skid row.⁸

Morbidity and mortality rates on skid row are very high. The risks of contagious disease, infection, exposure, injury and malnutrition are greater on skid row than in any other urban environment.⁹

Results from studies conducted in Toronto, Winnipeg, and British Columbia indicated that over 50% - 75% of the men either needed medical assistance at the time of the interview or were suffering from chronic health or physical disabilities.¹⁰

The Skid Row Stereotype

Probably there is no such thing as the typical homeless man. His general characteristics which have been noted in studies carried out by other researchers, however, indicate that the homeless man is a person who often comes from a background in which he:

⁷Samuel E. Wallace, Skid Row as a Way of Life, (Totawa, N. J.: The Bedminister Press, 1965), pp. 182-187.

⁸Howard M. Bhar, "Drinking, Interaction, and Identification: Notes on Socialization into Skid Row", Journal of Health and Social Behavior, Vol. 8, No. 4, December, 1967, pp. 272-274.

⁹Bogue, Skid Row in American Cities, pp. 199-230.

¹⁰"Homeless Transient Men", (Canadian Welfare Council, May, 1961) (mimeographed). Three other studies referred to in this report: Miss B. W. Snider, "Report on Homeless Transients in the Province of British Columbia", (British Columbia Department of Social Welfare, September, 1960) (mimeographed), "A Survey of Two Hundred Homeless Transient Men in the City of Toronto", (University of Toronto School of Social Work, 1960) (mimeographed), Don Browne, "Transient Single Men Survey", (Public Welfare Department, Winnipeg, 1959) (mimeographed).

- 1) had to quit school before he completed high school;
- 2) had his parental home broken by death, desertion or divorce;
- 3) had a good deal of institutional living in children's homes, reformatories, penitentiaries, mental hospitals and the like;
- 4) had no relatives or friends to whom he could turn to when his parental crises developed;
- 5) never learned a trade;
- 6) wandered around a great deal in his late teens or early twenties.

In the recent past he likely has:

- 1) not had a successful marriage if he married at all;
- 2) had considerable association with institutional living either as an inmate, in a penal institution, patient in a general hospital, mental hospital or alcoholism rehabilitation hospital or as a resident at least on a part-time basis in a hostel supported by public or private assistance sources.

At present he probably:

- 1) is in his early 40's;
- 2) is not an alcoholic but does have a drinking problem;
- 3) is a Canadian citizen;
- 4) is more concerned with the every day problem of keeping alive than taking steps toward his own rehabilitation;
- 5) does not like his present way of life and if the opportunity presented itself would leave the skid row environment;
- 6) has a low self-image, exhibits dependency behavior which would indicate that he feels insecure and inferior;
- 7) does not leave the city for periods of more than one or two months at a time;
- 8) is vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy because of his unstable employment and residency history;

9) is probably unaware of his own problems relating to personality and dependency.¹¹

For all practical purposes skid row as we know it has its roots in the period of tremendous social disorganization immediately following the American Civil War. Other factors which had considerable influence on its early development were the Industrial Revolution and massive immigration from Western Europe to North America.

A Historical Perspective

In order to gain a full understanding of the complexity of the skid row situation some historical perspective of the development of skid row is in order. Probably the major contributing factor to skid row is the economic condition of the society. Canada's economic development has followed the same general patterns as development in the United States. Mass movements of people and capital toward an undeveloped frontier initiated economic activity. An increase in trade and production stimulated a demand for a mobile labour force to exploit undeveloped resources. Increased mobility led to social disorganization

¹¹These characteristics have been taken from a number of different studies. Researchers seem to be in general agreement about the characteristics of the men on skid row. The problem is not lacking in statistical definition, the difficulty seems to be in the implementation of some of the recommendations in these studies. In addition to the studies cited above other studies examined were: "Social Planning Council Study Committee Welcome and Recreation Centre", (Social Planning Council of Calgary, June 11, 1969), (Mimeographed); R. C. Vanderkooi, "Relocating West Madison 'Skid Row' Residents: A Study of the Problem With Recommendations", (Chicago Department of Urban Renewal, May 1, 1967), (Mimeographed); "A Sociological and Psychological Study of 137 Homeless Unemployed Men", (Edmonton Day Centre, 1964), (Mimeographed); H. W. Dunham, Homeless Men and Their Habitats: A Research Planning Report, (Michigan, Wayne University, 1954).

as people left their homes to seek their fortunes along the developing frontier. During the course of history as a by product of fluctuations in the economy, changes in technology and man's limited ability to cope with change, a certain residue of misfits to the economic system developed. These misfits who cannot or will not compete in the context of our modern industrial economy make up skid row.

Since very little has been written about skid row in the Canadian context, the following review of American literature on the subject is presented to illustrate to the reader the general pattern of development of skid row in North America. For a clear illustration of the different stages of development this review has been broken down into four distinct historical periods.

Pre 1900

Homelessness as our society defines it today is a relatively recent historical concept. During biblical times nomadism was a necessary condition of a viable economy. As agriculture developed the need to move about in search of food and water became less important. As trade routes developed, societies began to specialize and the need for a reliable resource base became a priority. The Industrial Revolution magnified the need for a stable population to support a production and trade oriented economy. The period of history immediately prior to the turn of the century was characterized by considerable social and economic disorganization as society had to adjust to the demands of a new type of economy.

It was during this period of adjustment when the population was low and labour was at a premium that homelessness came to be sanctioned as deviant social behavior. The modern homeless man is subject to the

hangover of discriminatory practices and attitudes toward the homeless paupers who did not or could not conform to the work ethic of the eighteenth century.

Some of these practices and attitudes were documented by Henry Mayhew in his famous book, London Labour and London Poor. In his work Mayhew classified the poor of London into three categories, namely: "those that will work, those that cannot work and those that will not work." His explanation of the latter two categories was short and to the point. "Those who cannot work have physical and intellectual defects; those who will not work, moral defects."¹² Unfortunately, it is too easy for the general public even today to lump all the homeless men who do not work into the last category rather than attempting to find out whether they can or why they cannot work. This explanation of the actions of homeless persons in terms of their biological and moral deficiencies is the basis for the rather inhumane treatment they have often received by the rest of society. Suppression was the policy fairly widely employed to deal with the homeless until the latter part of the nineteenth century. The English Poor Laws were designed to aid the poor and end begging. Death by hanging was the penalty for begging on the third offense.¹³ Other forms of suppression developed through the years including police harassment, jail sentences for vagrancy and

¹²H. Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, (London: Griffin, Bohn and Company, 1862, Vol. III), p. 3.

¹³H. Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, Vol. IV, p. 34.

a one-way ticket out of town.¹⁴ A standard procedure on the part of a town or city not wanting to take the responsibility of caring for homeless men has been to establish residency requirements which have to be met before municipal relief can be claimed. It is interesting to note that of the major factors in the development of Edmonton's skid row, the policy of Eastern cities to provide the homeless with a one-way ticket to Edmonton during the depression, was partially counteracted by the residency requirements. These residency requirements are still enforced. Before an individual is eligible for municipal welfare assistance from the City of Edmonton, he must give proof of residence in the city for the previous twelve consecutive months.¹⁵ Otherwise he becomes the responsibility of the provincial government. Provincial assistance to able bodied single homeless men must be obtained through the Provincial Single Men's Hostel.

Despite these various attempts to discourage homelessness, the number of homeless men continued to grow. After each fluctuation in the business cycle and the social disorganization following each major

¹⁴Allsop, Hard Travellin', pp., 191-192. Early American vagrancy laws were adopted primarily as a result of the Puritan ethic, which evolved around the virtues of hard work. Although the official laws established under colonial rule in North America were never as harsh, according to Allsop the informal treatment of beggars and transients barely fall short of such practices as branding, nose slitting, and flogging practices in other colonies under the British Empire.

¹⁵This policy is generally a known fact among persons involved in the social field however no reference to this policy could be found. The residency requirements were taken from the Annual Report, (City of Edmonton Social Services Department, 1967).

adjustment in the social system a residue of persons who could not cope with the changes joined the ranks of the homeless.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century it became obvious that other steps would have to be taken to solve the problem of homelessness.

Although the new approach retained a good deal of the connotation of moral deficiencies as expressed by Mayhew, suppression gradually gave way to individual treatment as a means to control this social evil. Generally individual treatment was directed at curing the moral deficiency of the homeless man with a healthy dose of religion in return for food, clothing and shelter. Statistics have never been kept on how many homeless men were actually rehabilitated by this traditional approach. This change from suppression to some sort of individual attention served to institutionalize the mission and the social service agency as a necessary part of the skid row community.

Previous to the arrival of the institutions which distributed religious and material aid, skid row was probably characterized by a low rental housing district close to a major transportation link probably near the harbour, which had access to the saloons and other social facilities frequented by sailors on leave from their ships in harbour. The first references to material aid for the homeless men go back to the early 1800's when "The Sailors' Snug Inn" opened its first soup kitchen in New York for homeless seamen. By 1948 there were at least ten separate organizations devoted to the relief of seamen along the Atlantic coast towns.¹⁶

The development of skid row as we know it best was in large part a response to the development of the American frontier. For efficient

¹⁶Wallace, Skid Row As A Way of Life, p. 11.

development, the opening up of the frontier required a very large, mobile and inexpensive labour force. It was to accomodate the needs of this labour force that skid row came into existence.

It is not clear where the first skid row developed nor what institutions were first to arrive on skid row. It seems quite likely that the first congregations of transient labour developed in cheap rental districts close to the railway yards of an overland transportation route with facilities similar to those found around the docks.

Coincidental with the push to open the western frontier and quite possibly a precondition to it, social disorganization in Europe and the Eastern United States resulted in a heavy concentration of homeless people, a large population of whom were single men, in the cities of the North-eastern States. The wave of immigration which followed the potato famine, the Industrial Revolution and a period of religious upheaval in Europe reached its peak about the time of the American Civil War.

In recognition of the fact that the stability of the infant United States of America was contingent on the development of the west, American and recently arrived European capitalists were ready to invest in the future of America. Given land, capital and cheap labour the development of the frontier could begin. As rapid and orderly as it was, the development of the west was still subject to the unpredictability of the business cycle.

A number of soup kitchens came into existance in New York in 1866 to administer public relief to the persons, both veterans and families uprooted from their homes by the Civil War. The soup kitchen and missions however did not become firmly established as a skid row institution until the business failure in 1873 which caused unemployment

rates to rise to levels of 30% - 40% of the population. In 1873 the YMCA established a branch on New York's Bowery, to be followed in 1874 by the first lodging and houses of various other philanthropic organizations. The Salvation Army built four hostels on the Bowery between 1891 and 1903.¹⁷ By the turn of the century skid row was well established in most major cities across the United States.

The Golden Age

The American frontier was opened in two distinct phases. The first frontier reached the Pacific in 1890 and the second followed about thirty years later. It is of this period between the two frontiers that Nels Anderson writes in his book The Hobo.¹⁸ The hobos were the unattached men who made up the mobile labour force that was hired on by railroads, shippers, logging companies, agriculture and the like. He was willing to go anywhere, take any job and equally willing to move on later. During this time there was no such institution as the union and machines had not been invented that could replace this unskilled labour force. By the time Anderson brought out his famous book most writers had recognized the character of the homeless man, the hobo, as an important part of the culture of the American frontier. It was this recognition of its unique character and the important part the homeless man played in the economy which made the period 1900-1920 the golden age of skid row.

¹⁷Wallace, Skid Row as a Way of Life, Chapter Four.

¹⁸Nels Anderson, The Hobo, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1923). Anderson was one of the first writers to give an account of the sub-culture of skid row. Before writing his book and going on to become a professor in sociology at the University of Chicago, Anderson himself travelled across the Northern States living the life of a 'hobo'.

During this period skid row sections in cities and towns across the country expanded very rapidly. Unemployment was low and wages were high for those who wanted to work. The homeless man was the backbone of the nation's labour force. The hobo contributed more to the adventurous spirit of the 'old west' than we are often willing to admit. Hobos had money in their pockets and represented a substantial political force. This was illustrated when the hobos showed their strength in 1914 when strikes for higher wages and better working conditions in the San Joaquin Valley of California had to be quelled by the state militia. At the height of the golden age in 1913 a millionaire, James Eads Howe, founded Hobo College in Chicago at which an unknown number of hobos attended classes on the general subjects of citizenship, philosophy and socialism. Many of the legends, songs and poems from the opening of the frontier were written by hobos or about hobos. Numerous attempts were made to create organizations for the benefit and protection of hobos. Among those mentioned in Anderson's book are the International Workers of the World, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Ramblers and the Migratory Workers Union. Co-operative housing organizations were set up and many newspapers and books were written from time to time by hobos.

Despite the romantic style which Nels Anderson employs to illustrate the free and easy life of the hobos, this book presents very clearly some of the day-to-day difficulties faced by the homeless man.¹⁹ He points out the irregularity and the uncertainty of skid row

¹⁹Allsop covers the same historical period that is covered in Anderson's book. His reconstruction of the hobo routes adds an interesting historical perspective to the romantic style which Anderson portrays the life of the travelling hobo.

life. Life on the road under conditions of the 1920's was dangerous and unhealthy. Travel was free but with the freedom went the risk of being beaten by a railway policeman or a jackroller or worse still the risk of being run over and maimed or killed under the wheels of a freight train. Disease, dirt and dysentery were the norm in the unsanitary hobo camps in the open near the railroad tracks, in the high density housing skid row districts in the cities and in the frontier camps on the job. When a hobo became too old or disabled to travel, he joined the home guard which meant he was dependent for a good part of his existence on the charities operating the soup kitchens and the mission houses in the skid row district. The hobo was well adjusted to his precarious existence but despite the freedom he enjoyed going from job to job, the uncertainty of his life took its toll.

Seasonal or temporary periods of forced idleness has a disorganizing effect particularly on the unskilled worker. The damaging effect which is easily compensated for by developing loafing habits to while away the time. Quite often this idleness is institutionalized and is continually reinforced by a society out there who has branded this man a lazy worthless bum. ²⁰

Anderson defined the following hierarchy of types of homeless men: (a) the seasonal worker whose yearly circuit took him to different parts of the country filling the labour requirements of various occupations; (b) the transient or casual worker who worked at his own convenience at any job which came this way. He did not work steady but he earned his living primarily by working. It was this single homeless transient who made up the larger percentage of the skid row population, in the golden age; (c) the tramp who 'dreamed and wandered' and worked only when it was convenient. He travelled from town to town selling

²⁰Nels Anderson, The Hobo, p. 64.

gimmicks or begging a hand to mouth existence for the mere joy of living; (d) the home guard who lived on skid row all year round. He worked irregularly as casual unskilled labour. He was nearly self sufficient but occasionally had to beg from charity for his existence; (e) in the last and most rejected class of homeless man was the bum. Included in this type was the inveterate drunkard, the drug addict, the old, the helpless and unemployable. It is this class of skid rower which most people have stereotyped all men on skid row to be.

According to Anderson mobility between the ranks usually followed a downward pattern which often started before entering skid row proper. The call to the west was strong and wanderlust was often a viable alternative to the young who had difficulty establishing themselves as workers or in business. Unfortunately all too often the adventure and excitement of being a 'hobo' wore off only after they found themselves locked into the disorganizing subculture of skid row life. Afterwards acquiring certain negative habits as those of drinking, begging and losing all self control, self respect and desire to work they became real 'down and outers' whose existence as public parasites was dependent on the charitable deeds of the missions and the soup kitchens.²¹

As the population of homeless increased, so did the need for support of those who no longer were able to look after themselves. The pattern of providing care by the religious agencies was gradually supplemented by social service programs and case work as devices for rehabilitating the men. The social agencies were definitely a part of the skid row by the early 1920's. As the social service agencies

²¹Nels Anderson, The Hobo, Chapter Six.

entered the individual treatment field, they suffered a good deal of frustration trying to adapt the techniques applicable to family counselling, to the needs of the transient man who was often here today and gone tomorrow. Along with the social worker came the private agencies to exploit their interests on skid row. The private labour exchanges capitalized on the cheap source of labour as dozens of recruitment centers sprang up almost overnight to channel labourers to the frontier. The cubicle hotel became a skid row institution in response to the heavy demand for housing when the migratory workers congregated in the cities for the winter.

The conquering of the last frontier coincided with the outbreak of World War I in 1918. Manpower requirements in industry depleted the skid row population to the point where some of the relief agencies were able to close their doors. A new and declining period began in the history of the homeless man.

1920-1939 - Hardtimes

After the war the migratory worker was still a part of the economic development of America but with the coming of the automobile the pattern of mobility became more complex with the movement of whole families competing with the less reliable work force supplied by the transient men. During the period immediately following the First World War returning veterans were faced with a rising demand for skilled workers. The adventure associated with the hobo's life had less appeal to the younger men. Industrial development and mass unionization

began to absorb whole occupational groups from this substrata into the main social stream.

The period of decline following the war was disrupted by the great depression of the 1930's. Declining need for all kinds of labour resulted in many homeless men and homeless families being driven into the cities to find work or relief assistance. For a short period the demand was so great that the government had to step into the social service field to provide material aid and work relief programs to create jobs for those who were willing to work. The program of individual rehabilitation started during the 1920's was impossible to continue by virtue of the sheer numbers of men on relief.

Post 1940 - A Further Decline as the Homeless Were Absorbed Into Industry

With the coming of the Second World War the homeless on skid row who were willing to work were gradually absorbed into industry leaving a residue of men who either could not work, the aged, the handicapped and the unskilled or were not willing to work. Continued prosperity following the war absorbed the bulk of the returning veterans into industry. Government settlement and retraining programs and hiring policies served to provide many of the unskilled and handicapped veterans means by which to support themselves thus eliminating the necessity for their gravitation to skid row. As a consequence of these measures and the economic condition following the war, skid row is no longer a dynamic community needed to provide the labour force for industrial expansion in the United States.

The composition of skid row has changed from the predominantly migratory workers of the 1920's to a stable residual group of old age pensioners who can live nowhere else, alcoholics and disadvantaged workers who are on skid row due to lack of skill or some mental or physical handicap. This residual group performs the most menial tasks of industry frequently under poor working conditions and often at substandard wages. Most work only occasionally at casual labour and many never work at all. Some live on pensions so small that they could exist nowhere else: others are on old age relief and many survive by panhandling and occasional petty thefts. Besides this core population the area provides temporary accommodation for migratory workers and work seekers, eccentrics and fugitives of various kinds from conventional society.

The Canadian Experience

Skid row and the phenomenon of transiency has never been as acute in Canada as it has been in the United States. With the exception of our port cities like Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto, skid rows in Canada have only begun to develop in the last half a century.

The opening up of the Canadian West did not get into full swing until after the turn of the century. The early development of the railway system and the established trade routes which already linked Eastern with Western Canada, allowed for a more balanced growth than occurred in the United States. The movement of men and capital into the West did take place, but on such a scale that most of the labour

force could be absorbed into the economy, thus keeping the numbers of homeless and migratory workers quite low. Much of the labour imported to work on the railroads was attracted to Eastern Canada or the United States after the railways were built. The rapid expansion in the agriculture sector provided the stabilizing factor in the economic growth of the prairies. The seasonal demand for labour to develop the agriculture sector after 1905 was met largely by immigrant families and to some extent by local Indian and Metis labourers. Our total labour requirements in agriculture were lower than the United States since climatic conditions were not conducive to growing later intensive crops such as corn and cotton.

It wasn't until the mining, logging and construction industries began to get established in the 1920's that the demand for labour was sufficient to attract large numbers of transient workers to the West.

A major impetus for the expansion of skid row sections in Western Canada was the social disorganization brought about by the depression of the 1930's. The subsequent urbanization and industrialization resulted in a situation similar to that experienced in the United States. Unskilled labour began to be in surplus and the demand rose for the skilled and semi-skilled. Unemployment in the ranks of the unskilled was high.

As in the United States during this period governments participated in social assistance schemes for the first time. The hardest hit during this period were the farmers. Many who had purchased land during the boom of the 1920's were forced to give up their land when the world market for agricultural produce collapsed in 1929. The thirties were

drought years in the prairies as well. Those who owned their land found that they couldn't make enough even for their own living. The drought and the market prices pushed the farmers off their land. Many in Alberta went into the two main cities, Calgary and Edmonton. To many more, Edmonton was just a stopping point on the way into the wetter lands in the Peace River country. Homestead land absorbed some of the farmers. Private and government relief absorbed the others. In 1935 in Alberta the Social Credit government came into power on the crest of agrarian unrest with a pledge to provide the much needed employment.²² Many experiments were attempted. Farmers were paid five dollars a month to keep a hired man and public works projects in road building and land clearing were attempted. Probably the best known experiment was the 1936 issue of the now famous prosperity certificates. However, despite these experiments Alberta continued to have roving bands of workers, men who had to be fed. The word unemployment was beginning to yield an even uglier word - unemployable. The shabby men were beginning to adapt to shabbiness and to enjoy being footloose, tieless, irresponsible. When society at last made a place for them, after the economy picked up towards the beginning of the Second World War, many failed to fit in.²³

²²Robert Kroetsch, Alberta, (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1968), pp. 24-25.

See also, C. B. Macpherson, Democracy in Alberta: Social Credit and the Party System, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968).

²³W. G. Hardy, Alberta Golden Jubilee Anthology, (McClellan and Stewart Ltd., 1955), p. 148.

Political activism reminiscent of the "Golden Age" of the hobo in the United States was not entirely foreign to the Canadian scene. At one stage of the depression Tim Buck, in an attempt to expand the influence of the Communist Party in the West, organized a contingent of "freight car transients and relief workers" in a march on Ottawa. The operation failed when Buck and his marchers were stopped by the R.C.M.P. in Regina.²⁴

During the period 1931-41 the financial burden was heavy on the smaller municipalities to provide assistance to homeless men. One of the few effective devices these communities had to deal with the problem was a one-way ticket to a large urban centre such as Edmonton. The chance of getting a job or at least receiving assistance was greater there.

To reduce this financial burden many cities instituted very rigid residency requirements so that the transients could not qualify for social assistance. In an effort to relieve some of the stress, soup lines were established and the community minded organized distribution centres for clothing and household needs.

The Canadian economy began to pick up just prior to the beginning of the Second World War. Dramatic demands during the war years absorbed the main body of the unemployed. In anticipation of a post war slump, the federal government passed the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1940. The Alcan highway, pushed through from Montana to Alaska, marked the first step in the development boom which was to follow the war.

²⁴J. G. MacGregor, Edmonton - A History, (Edmonton, Mel Hurtig, 1967), pp. 244.

Immediately after the war considerable effort was made toward directing returning veterans into the civilian economy. Special education and retraining programs were established. The Veteran Land Act provided assistance to those who wanted to go into agriculture. Some of the veterans chose to join the labour force. Inevitably some of them could not adjust to the changes after the war and joined the ranks of the drop outs. Probably about one half of the single homeless men in Edmonton have a record of military service.²⁵

The transition from a war time economy to a peace time economy could not be accomplished over night. The ranks of the unemployed again began to rise. For a few years unemployment was cushioned by unemployment insurance benefits and war time savings. A larger labour pool to choose from resulted in the development of many of those handicapped individuals with restricted employment capacity who had been able to find work during the war.

The discovery of oil, expansion of the logging industry and the construction boom of the late 1940's and early 1950's absorbed many of the employable unemployed out of the labour force. Seasonal work however added to the difficulties of the unskilled workers. The Federal Unemployment Assistance Act, passed in 1955, provided some relief to the seasonally employed through a 50-50 cost sharing agreement with the provinces.

In respect to the stage of development of skid row many cities in Canada are at a different stage than cities in the United States.

²⁵The Toronto Study showed 127 men out of 200 interviewed had a record of military service. The British Columbia study reported 29 out of 55 having had military service.

The skid row population in cities such as Chicago and New York which exhibit the classical pattern of the rise and decline of the importance of skid row have been on the decline since the turn of the century.

It wasn't until the late 1950's and early 1960's that the full impact of the rising number of "unemployed employables" or homeless men was realized by the private and public social assistance institutions in Western Canada. In Edmonton public concern regarding the situation was registered in a recommendation at an open meeting of interested citizens and groups on May 30, 1962.

As the number of unemployed seeking shelter had risen from 173 in 1958 to 1374 in 1962 (monthly statistical report, All People's Mission) and that there was no provision being made to keep these men from walking the streets; to provide them with purposeful recreation; vocational training and guidance; rehabilitation counselling or spiritual needs; that a Day Centre be established and competently staffed for the assessment and referral of the problem that now has a growing concern in the community.²⁶

Recognition that skid row is a current problem in Canada has stimulated considerable activity among public and private relief agencies over the past decade. In recent years the skid row sections in cities all across North America have been the object of a large number of research projects for another reason. Many city governments have shown interest in reclaiming land through urban renewal projects.²⁷

Many of the buildings in these urban renewal areas are obsolete. It is generally more economical to tear them down and replace them with modern facilities than to recondition them for modern use. Unfortunately much of this same land close to the central business district is the

²⁶A brief history of the Edmonton Day Centre (mimeographed), Edmonton Day Centre Annual Report - Edmonton Day Centre, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969.

²⁷Urban renewal was first mentioned in Canadian legislation in the revised National Housing Act, 1954. This act made available Federal funds for purposes of slum clearance and urban relocation.

present location of the skid row section of these cities. If these areas are reconstructed, questions arise regarding the future of skid row and the men who live there. The results of many researchers point toward the potential eradication of the current skid row from the urban scene altogether, through relocation and rehabilitation programs. There is considerable controversy over the device necessary to do the job. A number of cities are experimenting with different techniques.²⁸

With this interest in the future of skid row sections in other cities and the possible future development in our own city in mind, a study and evaluation of the agencies and institutions servicing the residents of the skid row section in Edmonton warrants considerable attention at this time.

The specific concern of the remainder of this thesis is to examine the activity of social agencies and institutions in the skid row section of our own city.

Edmonton's urban renewal scheme stimulated considerable interest in the city's skid row section. One report,²⁹ which came out shortly after Edmonton began thinking about urban renewal, proudly represented Edmonton as the first city in Canada to be involved in the renewal of a skid row area. A similar statement could be made today to the effect

²⁸R. C. Vanderkooi, "Relocating West Madison Skid Row Residents", p. 2. See also Nan Markal Segal, "The Unchanging Area in Transition", Land Economics, XLIII, 3 (1967), Howard M. Bhar, "The Gradual Disappearance of Skid Row", Social Problems, Vol. 15, I, (Summer, 1967), The Diagnostic and Relocation Centre, City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia's Skid Row: A Demonstration in Human Renewal, William J. Plunkert, "Is Skid Row Necessary", The Canadian Journal of Corrections, Vol. 2, (April 1960), pp. 200-208.

²⁹Dr. Albert Tose, "Report of Presentation to the Social Seminar on Urban Renewal, Edmonton, June 28, 1967). (Mimeographed).

Dr. Rose recommended in his report a comprehensive examination

that she is one of the few larger cities in Canada that has not made sufficient effort to understand and remedy that problem. Edmonton's urban renewal scheme was never carried out.

With this perspective in mind the rest of this thesis is an attempt by the writer to explore the existing skid row situation in the City of Edmonton.

Chapter II is devoted to an explanation of the methodology used in this study. The research technique was primarily participant observation. The writer's introduction into the area and some of the difficulties posed by this type of approach are discussed.

In Chapter III an attempt has been made to describe Edmonton's skid row district, the physical location, and the problem by way of an illustration of the difficulties encountered when a man from skid row attempts to get out of the trap he is in via the route of employment.

Chapter IV is an examination of the agencies and institutions in the skid row sections which cater to the needs of the men living there.

Chapter V examines the activities of three types of social workers working with these social agencies and institutions.

In Chapter VI an attempt has been made to examine the various approaches currently advocated to meet the needs of men living in Edmonton's skid row.

of studies of 'skid row' in other American cities and a comparative study of the situation in Edmonton's Boyle Street area to develop some alternate living arrangements for the residents of the skid row section. The study which was carried out in the Boyle Street area excluded any study of its transient population. To my knowledge no other studies of any significance have been carried out on Edmonton's skid row.

Chapter VII is a recapitulation of the historical perspective of the present situation and a concluding statement regarding the writer's evaluation of social agency programs in the skid row area.

Chapter II

METHODOLOGY

Many authors have written about 'Skid Row', each from his own point of view, each with his own particular bias. In order to illustrate the writer's point of view and prepare the reader for his bias, it may be worthwhile to outline the circumstances which led to selecting a topic such as skid row for a thesis. Previous to the summer of 1969 the writer's contact with the urban scene was peripheral. Four years as an undergraduate at the university was sufficient to become familiarized with some obvious aspects of the city and city life. Following university, two years with CUSO in India developed some impressions of poverty and how people in one part of the world were coping with problems like unemployment, population density and the shortage of food, shelter and clothing. Having had a taste of development work, the writer enrolled in the Interdisciplinary Master of Arts Program in Community Development at the University of Alberta.

The writer's initial motivation for spending some time on the Boyle Street area was employment. One of the curriculum requirements of the Interdisciplinary Master of Arts Program in Community Development was a four month field work experience with an agency working in some aspect of the social development field. The writer was fortunate enough to be hired on by the Community Development Branch of the Human Resources Development Authority for the period of May-September, 1969 as a summer assistant in the urban area.

The flexibility enjoyed working for the Community Development

Branch allowed one to approach the community both as a student and as a participant observer moving about in the social milieu at the street level.

Due to the short duration of the field work, it was felt that the greatest opportunity for learning would be in that area of the city where the social problems of industrialization and urbanization were most acute and the casualties of the processes most visible. Through his association with many of the social agencies and the inhabitants of the Boyle Street community in the City of Edmonton, the writer became interested in the social condition of the transient man as a topic of study for his thesis.

Introduction to the Area

Apart from a considerable amount of just walking around the Boyle Street area, talking to men on the street and visiting the various 'skid row' establishments, the main introduction to the Boyle Street area was through a private employment agency. After initially approaching this agency looking for a job, the writer presented himself to the management as a student and requested their assistance in being placed out on the job with some of the different 'types' who frequented the employment service. The agency was particularly co-operative in placement and providing the writer some of the rarest experiences of his research. Through this initial introduction to some of the fairly permanent residents of the area, the writer was able to develop contacts with a fairly general cross section of the unemployed single male population. From this perspective the writer was able to observe the effectiveness and in some cases the futility of the present network of social agencies operating in the Boyle Street area.

Introduction to the social agency personnel was greatly facilitated through association with the Community Development Branch. As a student the writer was in a position to relate on a professional level with the personnel of the agencies which provided services of one sort or another to the transient men. In most instances the writer was introduced to the agency personnel via one of the Urban Community Development Workers or a member of the staff of a related social agency. In a few cases the agency was directly approached by the writer as a university student from the Interdisciplinary Master of Arts Program in Community Development interested in gaining some insight into the social condition of the transient men.

Gaining Rapport with Data Sources

The initial entree into the transient subculture was difficult. In general the attitude of the men was one of suspicion. Each time a new contact with an individual group of men was made, a subtle ritual was performed to determine the writer's background and what his purpose in the area was. To illustrate, a common introduction to a group was often a comment passed about the work situation. Usually the comment was meaningless but it gave the newcomer to the group an opening to give some indication of his present employment status, where he was working, or had just been working, or where he would like to work, and so forth. Very seldom were any direct questions asked about the writer's personal circumstances.

In most cases the writer was able to offer a story general enough to cover in the event that he later wanted to explain his position as a participant observer. Establishing rapport beyond a very superficial here and now type of relationship was very time consuming.

Even maintaining any sort of continuous day to day contact with individual men was difficult. Men were continually shifting from one group of buddies to another. Men who appeared to be very good friends for a week or so would suddenly call off the friendship over some small misunderstanding and then not talk to each other for a week or so. A common social mixer was a bottle of cheap wine. The writer established rapport with a number of good informants by contributing a dime or twenty-five cents to make enough for a bottle of Jordan Brandvin Sherry. Although good rapport was developed with a number of men and through these relationships the writer gained some insights into the life and the difficulties faced by the transient man, a much longer time than four months is required to adequately understand the whole transient scene. Establishing rapport with the agency personnel to the point where they would openly discuss both the strong and the weak points of their own programs usually took two or three visits. In a few cases some reluctance was sensed to share the specific details involved in the implementation of stated agency philosophy.

This tendency seemed to be more prevalent among the field workers than the supervisory staff. Much information was related in confidence by staff members. This material concerned the staff and the programs of other agencies. Social agency staff seem to vent their frustrations through involvement in petty politics, rather than communication and co-operation.

Problems of Validity and Reliability

For reasons such as that suggested above the writer found it necessary to continually cross check his data from a number of different sources. The final data is in some cases the composite opinion of a

number of sources. In some instances data could not be confirmed to be accurate from an outside source. In such cases the writer attempted to cross check data from each informant through repeated in-depth interview.

The quality of data varied considerably according to the circumstances under which it was gathered and the rapport the writer had established with the informant. The data in this thesis is subject to the writer's own bias in interpretation.

Data Collection and Data Sources

Participant observation. The primary method utilized to collect data for this thesis was participant observation. In the attempt to examine the non-statistical character of the homeless man and his relationship to the social services in the Boyle Street area two different approaches were followed. Over one-half of the research time was spent posing as a transient man following the job finding routine, hanging around charitable institutions, going to evangelical mission services, eating at the Provincial Single Men's Hostel and so on.

The remaining time was taken up in participant observation at the social agency level posing as a student and up and coming professional. Ideally a study of this nature should be carried out by a research team rather than a single researcher. Boyle Street is not a large area. Changing roles from transient to professional and back to transient aroused a certain amount of suspicion both on the part of the agency personnel and the transient men. It also created considerable frustration for the researcher. Each day had to be planned ahead according to which role the writer was likely to assume for that day. To illustrate a typical dilemma faced daily by the writer, picture the transient man who owns nothing more than the clothes on his back. One

day he meets this guy on the street, dressed like a bum, who talks to him, maybe offers him a cigarette and tries to get to know him as another human being in a similar situation to his own. What does this transient think the next day when he sees this same guy come out of a social agency personnel office, fairly well dressed, possibly with a sports jacket and tie on? He becomes even more suspicious when this guy meets a friend, who obviously comes from the middle class, and gets into a car and drives away.

Key informant technique. A few of the men the writer met, came to know about the purpose of his participant observation. These relationships proved to be extremely valuable for purposes of data collection. Many insights would have been missed due to the writer's middle class perception had these informants not interpreted many common place activities from their own point of view. Some of the relationships established in the summer of 1969 have been maintained over the winter 1969-70. This extended period of time has allowed the writer to get some sort of perspective over time of the activities and movements of the relatively permanent population of transient men.

Field Diary. Throughout the summer the writer kept daily notes on his own activities while in the field. The writer supplemented his field notes with storage of data on a tape recorder.

Agency files and public relations material. In order to collect written data relevant to the central concern of the thesis the writer started by examining each agency's public relation's material. This gave a general idea of the services provided and the approach each agency stated it took to the community. For more information about specific projects mentioned in the literature interviews were arranged

with the agency staff. Some of these interviews led to an invitation to spend a day or so with them, helping or just observing their normal operation. The agency files were another source of information on the specific details and history of interesting projects. Whenever possible the writer tried to obtain the views of other agencies and the recipients of the services involved with each project in order to compare perceptions and observe the project from as broad a perspective as possible.

Statistical studies and formal interviews. Statistics whenever used are estimates based on hearsay and observation or taken from statistical studies of other researchers. Through the winter the writer made an acquaintance with an Educational Psychology student from the University of Alberta, Mr. Al Riedigar, who was carrying out a survey of a random sample of one hundred men who frequented the Edmonton Day Centre during the months of February and March, 1970. A preliminary examination of his data indicated that the statistical character of the homeless, unemployed man in Edmonton is similar to that reported in other studies. By assisting Mr. Riedigar with some of his interviewing the writer was able to meet with a number of transient men in a formal structured situation. This provided the writer with another perspective and filled in some of the gaps in his knowledge of the activities of the transient man.

Chapter III

EDMONTON'S SKID ROW

In this chapter the writer has attempted to focus on the skid row phenomenon as it exists today in Edmonton, Alberta. A brief description of the physical location of the area is followed by an examination of some of the reasons for skid row. This perspective on the problem that exists is derived from observation and discussion with some of the men who are faced with that problem and some of the agencies which are trying to help them solve it.

The Location

Edmonton's skid row is located east of the city's central business district in a section popularly known as the Boyle Street area. The activities of the skid row inhabitants are concentrated in an area extending a few blocks north and south of the CNR tracks between 95th and 101st Street. Some transients sleep at night in the scrub brush and weed patches along the edge of the river bank between the Grierson Hill Golf Course and the 105th Street Bridge.¹ Men from skid row are discouraged by the police from loitering in the central business district and the 'tenderloin' along 97th Street bordering Jasper Avenue during the day. They stay away from this area at night for fear of the abuse they receive from the pimps, jackrollers and other rowdy types who frequent the area. Other areas of the city, Old Strathcona, Old Jasper Place, Beverly, Calder, etc., display some characteristics similar

to this area but the main concentration of single, homeless, unemployed men exists around Boyle Street. The skid row population varies according to the season and employment conditions. The 'hard core', semi-permanent population is estimated to be between 300-500. During peak periods the population is estimated to be upwards of 1500-2000.² To date, few statistics have been gathered so that little is actually known about the number and characteristics of these men. From readings on the subject and participant observation carried out during the summer of 1969, the only certain characteristic about these men is the fact that they are in our city. Recognition of their presence is the first step to some remedial action.

The Problem

Industry and its technology has done much to contribute to the misery of the poor. As more and better machines are designed, fewer but better educated men are needed to run them. Job training programs are over crowded and require a standard of admission that cannot be met by those in need of their help.³

²These statistics are generally quoted by newspaper articles, agency reports and the men themselves. An actual head count has never been taken. Some statistics which would support these estimates are given below.

Mr. Justice O'Byrne in his report on the operation of the single men's hostel estimates that there are 200-300 'hard core' hostel users. The Salvation Army is not included in this estimate. The number of noon meals served to the men by the Marian Centre averages about 500 per day.

The total capacity in the Provincial Single Men's Hostel and the auxiliary hostels is about 1000. Added to this are reports of two men per bed and mattresses on the floor both in the hostel and auxiliary hostels during peak periods. The record number of men finding accommodation at the overnight shelter during the peak period in the spring of 1970 was 112. In addition to these facilities offered free the number of beds available through cheap hotels and rooming houses could easily boost the accommodation facility available to single unattached men well over the estimated 2000.

³This quote was taken from a speech by T. Garvin, Urban Community Development Officer, Edmonton, 1969.

In a nutshell this explanation by T. J. Garvin demonstrates a major part of the dilemma faced by the unemployed single transient men. Garvin could have gone on to explain that traditionally a major attraction to skid row has always been its function as a labour market. With the advent of technological and structural employment, this function has given way to new functions like cheap lodging, relative independence, cheap recreation and so forth for persons who for one reason or another can't make it in the mainstream of society. Unemployment or under-employment is probably the chief reason for the transient man getting to skid row. The solution to the problem is more complicated than simply finding a job. In many ways the transient single man out of a job is in a cage which is very difficult to get out of. The unemployed single transient on skid row may have been put into this cage through unemployment or maybe he found his own way into it through the maze of a reckless youth probably involving alcoholism, and the law, but possibly a death in the family or some other social or psychological circumstance. The transient man reacts like any other animal which suddenly finds itself in a cage. A few vicious attempts to claw its way out and the animal soon learns that if it tries too hard to get out its going to hurt itself. Like the animal trying to get out of the cage after a few tries the unemployed transient man gives up trying. He has to learn to live in his vicious cage and cope with the pressures of living on skid row. Below, the writer has attempted to illustrate the situation faced by the transient man looking for work. An attempt has been made to examine the jobs he can do and some of the other factors which contribute to his being offered the job and which often contribute to his inability to hold a job once he is employed. Some of the necessary

qualifications for employment such as education, job skills, personality traits, and so forth can be acquired by anyone with proper direction over a period of time. Other attributes such as intelligence, health and mental or physical handicaps, personality disorders, are more or less permanent and cannot easily be changed over time. When anyone applies for a job, his application is subject to a number of criteria which are not mentioned on the application form. Some of these criteria can and do contribute to why, when two people apply for the same job, one gets it and the other doesn't.

An Illustration

The difficulties faced by the transient man looking for a job may be illustrated more clearly by the following hypothetical case histories.

'Skid Row Sam' and 'Middle Class Joe' are two prospective employees. Suppose for the sake of argument that Sam has an honest desire to get out of the vicious trap of skid row.

Sam. Sam may be any age from eighteen to eighty. He is probably in his early forties. His health is relatively good but the days are gone when he could work a 12 hour shift on an oil rig in the north. He still wonders whether maybe someday he would like to get a steady job and settle down in one town, with his own apartment and maybe even start saving a little money for a T.V. set and some new clothes. His present situation is next to intolerable. The only job he could get eight months ago was seasonal. He spent three months in the bush. When he came to the city, he hadn't had a drink for three months and he hardly knew a soul. Three weeks later he had all kinds of friends. He was at the mid-point of a six week party and he still had \$500 left

to spend. Sam started looking as soon as the party was over but he hasn't been able to find work since he came out of the bush. His Unemployment Insurance Benefits stamps ran out last week and he is now back at the bottom of the social heap, living on public assistance, on skid row.

Sam has probably been following a cycle similar to this since he came home from the war or left his home to make his fortune in the 'north'.

Every time Sam gets to this part of the cycle, he decides he really wants to get off the skids and somehow make it back into the mainstream of society. Unfortunately the route for him is not that well marked or easy.

Joe. Joe is an ordinary guy, part of the working or middle class. His home situation is probably quite different from Sam's, primarily because he does have a home. Joe is unattached as Sam is, he is employed but is looking for a different job.

Both Sam and Joe read the employment column in the local paper on the same day. This in itself is a stroke of luck for Sam. He usually doesn't see the paper until it is a couple of days old but today he happened to be helping one of his older retired friends who sells the newspaper on the street corner and managed to slip the business section out of one of the papers before he sold it to a customer. Usually Sam reads the paper in the T.V. lounge at one of the social agencies after the agency staff has read it. Very often he doesn't have the chance to read the employment section anyway because someone else has carefully folded it up and put it inside the lining of his coat to be read at a later date away from the smoke and noise

of the recreation room.

Joe picks up his paper off his front step, takes his coat off at the door, puts the kettle on in the kitchenette and settles down in the big chair in the corner of his bachelor apartment to read the funnies and the employment section.

There are a number of jobs available. A journey man carpenter with five years experience is required on a construction job in the new housing development on the edge of the city. One of Joe's friends got a job just like that last week. He didn't have the experience but did have his papers so the company hired him on speculation.

Sam's friend had applied for the same job. He didn't have his papers but he had a number of years of experience. They turned him down for a number of reasons, too old, poor references, probably unreliable, probably a drinking problem, a poor address, and of course he didn't have the qualifications. The last Sam heard of his friend he was trying to get back on with the company that laid him off even though the working conditions were tenuous and the pay was substandard.

Joe sees another job that interests him. It is a job similar to the one he holds now, in another province. The ad says experience will be considered in lieu of post secondary training. Write to Box 007, Big Creek. After writing his request for particulars, Joe checks with Canada Manpower regarding their job transfer plans and makes temporary arrangements with his counsellor to travel to Big Creek to have a first hand look at the job situation. Joe is quite familiar with the operation of Canada Manpower. A number of his friends have taken retraining and upgrading through their Occupational Training For Adults (O.T.A.) programs. Joe never had to go back to school after

he quit. His father's knowledge and influence got him his first job and a combination of a working class background and some lucky breaks were sufficient to advance him pretty rapidly. Joe is offered the job at Big Creek but he turns it down. The pay was good but they were asking him to spend too much time out of town.

Sam looks at the job but doesn't consider it for very long. He had to quit school to help out at home so he doesn't have any secondary schooling. Someone got him interested in upgrading and retraining once. He waited around for six months to get into the course but his savings ran out and welfare wouldn't support him anymore so he had to take a job up north. He's been back a couple of times but his work record isn't good so they won't even register him now. The ad calls for a reply in writing. Sam can read and write, in fact he has written some pretty decent poetry that he keeps in the lining of his suitcase on the rack at the Day Centre, but writing away for particulars about a job would probably be a futile exercise. He would never receive a reply from a job inquiry using a skid row address.

The next job is one Sam can apply for. Unskilled labour required in the Yukon to lay railroad track. The pay is good and the ad offered room and board with a free trip out in six months. It means Sam will be isolated in a bush camp for the six months over the summer. It would be good to get off the booze for a while and build up his health a bit. He could probably take it if he had to, but it means going through the same mill when he gets back to town.

A man 45 years old thinks twice about taking on a heavy job in the north especially with the outfit that put in the advertisement. One of Sam's friends was up on a job with them last summer. They

hadn't been on the job two weeks before they were all laid off. The company had flown in two charter plane loads of Portuguese labourers. They were not as expensive and there was no call for them to come down out of the bush so they'd stay there until the company flew them back to Portugal.

Joe read the same advertisement with some nostalgia. He had taken a similar type of job once, just after he quit high school. Yes sir, he'd been a rugged frontier man for a while. He didn't let it get into his blood though like it did a lot of guys his age. When he came back from the war, he took a good steady job and stuck with it. He'd have to admit that he'd had a few good breaks and the support of his family and friends certainly did help him stick with his career.

The next ad is for an assistant foreman on a construction job. Joe decides to apply for this and he picks up the telephone, gives his name and arranges for an appointment the following day. The appointment he makes is for 9:00 a.m. This gives him time to have a good breakfast and do the small chores around his apartment before he drives his 1967 Mustang over to the company office for an interview. He shows up to the interview in a laundry pressed shirt, casual pants and shined shoes. During the interview he discovers that he and the new boss have a mutual friend and they both like football. He goes away from the interview confident that his name stands pretty high up on the list of potential candidates for the job.

Sam has applied for many jobs like this one. He knows he probably won't have a chance to get this job unless it is a shoe-string outfit. Then he would likely be offered substandard wages and inferior working conditions. He tries it anyway. By the time Sam has located

a free phone its late in the day and a number of prospective employees have already called for interviews. However, the secretary at the other end does take his name down and sets up an appointment for the next day at 8:00 a.m. This poses some difficulty for Sam. However, he is willing to miss his breakfast at the hostel in order to make the interview. The rest of the day Sam spends trying to hustle up enough money for bus fare in the morning. While he is at it, he approaches a couple of the social agencies for some better clothing. The clothes he has on don't fit properly and they aren't very presentable. He doesn't have the facilities to keep them cleaned and repaired. By some stroke of luck one of the social workers manages to outfit him in a better set of clothes. They are relatively clean and he is presentable even though the combination of an out-of-style suit coat and work pants with a wrinkled white shirt and off-color heavy sweater makes it pretty obvious that the outfit came from somebody's rag bag. With his new suit of clothes Sam has to take special care to make sure his bed is pushed against his foot locker so that they will be there for him in the morning. He can't sleep in them like he normally would do because he wants to look as presentable as he can for the interview. Sam is awakened around 6:00 a.m. by the hacking and coughing of the other guests of the skid row rooming house where the Department of Social Development has placed him. He probably had a relatively good sleep with only a few interruptions as the odd drunk stumbled down the hall to the common bathroom. Sam is dressed and out of the rooming house by 7:00 a.m. He got some bus tickets so he doesn't have to walk to his interview. At 8:00 a.m. he presents himself to the secretary at the company office. The girl doesn't just take one look at him, excuse herself for a moment to talk to the boss, and proceed to throw him out. Instead, she has him fill out an application form and sends

him into the office for an interview. While filling out the form Sam does his best to cover up his skid row background. Many times he has gotten this far in a job interview but has been rejected because of his skid row address. For a fleeting moment Sam reflects on the money he spent to rent the party room in the Commercial Hotel after his last trip into the north and the promises he made to himself to stay off the booze and away from the influence of his mooching friends. If he doesn't get a job, Sam has no choice but to go back to skid row where he is again lumped together with men suffering from alcoholism, or drug addiction, men with records and criminal tendencies, men who are mentally and emotionally unstable, men who are physically and emotionally handicapped, men without hope and often in despair, men who are dependent recipients of services. This milieu and the necessity to beg for one's existence from local charity is sufficient to dishearten even those with the strongest motivation to stand on their own two feet and live according to normal standards.

The interview for a man like Sam is critical. Most personnel officers avoid taking risks. Only the employees who get fired are ever counted on their records. As he makes his scrutiny of Sam, his appearance, his education, disabilities and his background, the personnel officer is searching for negative evidence which would define Sam as a risk. Any handicap whether physical or mental is a risk. The after effects of a social 'illness' such as a prison term, prevents bonding and security clearances and is a risk to the company's security. The personnel officer must always be conscious of the reaction of the public. Would Sam contaminate the 'corporate' image if the public had to deal with him directly or found out about his background? Human beings when called upon to judge the character of others have a tendency

to make their judgement on the basis of one outstanding defining trait. This tendency is called the halo effect and it works both positively and negatively.

If this particular employer saw the positive side of Sam first, his varied experience and the initiative he showed in making the interview he might give him a chance. If he didn't label Sam and put him on the skid row bag with all the others, he might realize Sam is a real human being with real feelings and real potential and give him a job.

If this employer hadn't made a commitment of sorts to hire the son of a friend of his for the job he might have employed Sam. As Sam expected the employer completes the job finding ritual. He gives Sam the 'don't call me, I'll call you line' and sends Sam back home.

Suppose the employer reconsidered Sam's application and when Sam went for supper at the hostel that evening there was a message waiting for him to the effect that Sam did have the job after all. Once Sam has the job he has really only begun to overcome the hurdles to getting off skid row. As he starts out walking to his first day on the job many big questions must be running through Sam's mind. Can he survive until his first pay check? He'll have to probably stay in the hostel till then. Can he live on skid row and hold down a permanent job? Will he be able to get along with his boss? Can he punch the time clock? Can he stay off the booze? Will he get a second chance if he makes a little slip? Can Sam really make it?

Without help it is not likely. Sam will have to move to keep away from his mooching friends. If he is lucky, he might fit into a group on the outside which will give him the support any normal person

needs to deal with normal job frustrations. Chances are Sam will not last long before a variety of social and psychological pressures drive him back to the bottle and from there back to skid row. Unless he gets appropriate help, he'll probably fail again.

Comments and Summary

Sam like many of the other men on skid row probably was not raised in a milieu conducive to obtaining a good education and developing a stable employment history. Since he left his home to take up a job as part of the mobile labour force he has probably held some of the highest risk and most well paid jobs in the construction and mining industry. If he was not disabled early in his career through some accident due to the conditions of his job, the skid row man probably made quite a lot of money in his prime working years. He probably also spent a lot of money in ways which the middle class reader would deem pretty wasteful whenever he came to town. All in all he has probably led a pretty colorful career. This pattern of activity is not unique to the present residents of our skid row areas. Many of our middle class citizens who were raised during the depression and war years have similar experiences in their own backgrounds. The question can be raised as to why some of the men who left home to go to work or to seek their fortune in the bush camps, on the oil rigs and in the mines of Canada's frontier, ended up in the working or middle class while others constitute our skid row population?

Part of the answer may be described in terms of social

credibility. Social credibility⁴ is the tolerance factor in social relationships which makes allowance for a certain amount of deviant behavior. Like financial credibility a certain amount of social credibility is inherited. Social credibility can be established in much the same fashion as credit rating at the bank. For collateral one can draw on his families name, his father's social status, personal references and so forth. Very often the family of a man born into an urban slum has no social credibility upon which to build. An example may be in order to illustrate what is meant by social credibility. Suppose the son of a local judge was caught pilfering out of a department store. He would probably be reprimanded and the incident reported to his father. After all it is natural for youth to experiment. If the son of a local family known to be on public assistance was caught in the same act, he would likely be turned over to the police and possibly even sent to the juvenile court. The reason for this differential treatment is the difference in social credibility of the two boys. If the judge's son continued to pilfer eventually his social credibility would be reduced. It could even be further reduced if he was sentenced to a penal institution or a mental institution for his misdemeanors. Once lost, social credibility is very difficult to build up again. A most striking example here is the difficulty encountered by the ex-convict in trying to gain acceptance after he has been legally punished for his deviant behavior. An ex-convict is considered a poor social risk just as someone who has had a car accident or a speeding

⁴J. P. Wiseman, *Stations of the Lost*, (N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 233.

Wiseman maintains that the lack of social margin or credibility accounts for much of the 'now orientation' and absence of the norm of deferred gratification in the skid row subculture.

ticket is considered a poor insurance risk.

The social credibility of a man on skid row is very low. This is the essence of the problem.

Lack of suitable employment is probably the main cause for men to find their way onto skid row. Once a man becomes 'down and out' however, the employment problem may very well take a back seat to other problems which are more difficult to solve. Several studies of skid row in other cities indicate a high rate of alcoholism and heavy drinking among skid row inhabitants. Physical and mental disabilities among skid row men appear to be more prevalent than the average for the rest of the population.⁵

Perhaps the most urgent problem the skid row man has to solve day by day is the problem of survival. How does he manage to find adequate food, shelter and clothing just to keep him alive?

The next chapter is a survey of some of the agencies and institutions in the City of Edmonton which cater to many of the needs of the man on skid row. An attempt has been made to outline the services available in order of importance from the perspective of the man living on skid row.

⁵Statistics of this nature are not yet available for the City of Edmonton. For studies in other cities see:

Tenants Relocation Bureau, The Homeless Man on Skid Row. City of Chicago, September, 1961.

The Diagnostic and Relocation Centre, Philadelphia's Skid Row: A Demonstration in Urban Renewal. The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia, September, 1964.

Howard M. Bhar, Drinking, Interaction and Identification: Notes on Socialization into Skid Row. Bureau of Applied Social Research Columbia University, 1966.

Chapter IV
INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES SERVICING SKID ROW
IN THE BOYLE STREET AREA

The names and functions of all of the social service agencies in the Boyle Street area are too numerous to mention. In this chapter the writer has limited his discussion to those agencies and institutions which were most active during the research period. For purposes of clarity the services and programs offered are grouped according to the needs they cater to. The order of discussion is organized according to the need as received from the perspective of the recipients of the services. The primary needs of single homeless men from his point of view are food, shelter and clothing. After these basic necessities have been met the man on skid row is in a position to look to the future. Preparation for the future may involve looking after simple health needs, which could be serviced by a general out-patients clinic or it may be the need for treatment of some chronic ailment such as T.B. or alcoholism. The next step in his hierarchy of needs is employment. Most of the men the writer met would like to have had a job and the independence which goes along with earning an income. Few of them were in a position to get a job and keep it because they were so preoccupied with survival and satisfaction of their basic needs that they could not afford to work. A level of need which is not discussed, but which is probably the most important need of all is the need for education and retraining. Many men are on skid row because they lack the necessary training and skills to compete in the labour force.

Basic Needs

This first grouping covers the institutions which cater to the food, shelter, clothing and spiritual needs of the single homeless man. In the City of Edmonton there are six major institutions which have been concerned with meeting these basic needs over the past few years. It would appear that the activity each agency or institution in the social field is dependent on the leadership and the financial resources at the time. Some of the agencies and institutions discussed are more active than the others. Some of the history and functions of each of these agencies are discussed below.

Salvation Army.¹ The Salvation Army was the first agency to establish a program of assistance to single homeless men in the City of Edmonton.

The 'Salvationists' arrived in the early 1890's when Edmonton was 'the end of the steel' and the starting point of the overland route to the 'Klondike'. The first record of social services date back to 1907 when they operated out of a Woodshed and Shelter in Southside Edmonton near the CPR station. The number of transients in those days were few. The 'Sally Ann' could accommodate 7-10 persons at a time.

During the 20's the 'Army' expanded their facilities for homeless men. A 108 bed hostel was opened in 1923 on the site of the new court building, across from the Army and Navy Department Store. During this time their program was expanded beyond provision of food and shelter to include court counselling service and chaplaincy work at the Fort

¹The information regarding the Salvation Army was related to me in a number of interviews with Major Haagbend and the staff of the Salvation Army Men's Social Service Centre.

Saskatchewan gaol. In 1928 the Bonnie Doon Fire Hall was turned over to the Salvation Army and made into the Eventide Home for Men. The facilities of the Salvation Army were further expanded when the Men's Social Service Department was moved to its present location on 102 Avenue and 96th Street in 1954. The present facilities provide sleeping accommodation for 165 men in dormitories and private rooms, a recreation/T.V. room, a chapel and a cafeteria with a seating capacity of 50. The Salvation Army Rehabilitation House for Alcoholics was opened next door to the Men's Social Service Department in 1967. The Rehabilitation House accommodates seven to ten men. The program offered there is based primarily on spiritual counselling. An integral part of the rehabilitation program is the industrial centre. This is the hub of the Salvation Army's salvage operation. Used articles of clothing, furniture, electrical appliances and so forth donated to the Salvation Army are sorted and repaired in the industrial centre. Some of the men are employed in the Salvation Army's Commercial outlets for second hand articles as well.

According to the Salvation Army brochure their rehabilitation centre

gives a man, who has lost grip on himself, a chance to regain a considerable measure of self mastery; demonstrate his own initiative in overcoming his particular handicap; acquire moral and spiritual principals of conduct and habits of industry; establish new moral standards as well as new work habits and skills.²

During the writer's contact with the rehabilitation program no professionally trained counselors were on the Salvation Army staff.

²The Salvation Army, The Shield of Service, Annual Report, 1968 (Edmonton, Salvation Army Public Relations Department.)

The administrator indicated however that when the proposed Harbour Light Rehabilitation Centre opened the intention was to upgrade the counselling services to complement the present spiritual counselling.

Other services offered by the Salvation Army include a clothing distribution service for indigent men and a twenty-four hour suicide counselling service.

Provincial Single Men's Hostel.³ In 1955, the Alberta government built the Provincial Single Men's Hostel. This hostel was administered by the Department of Welfare, now the Department of Social Development, as part of a provincial program to provide the basic necessities of life to single indigent men in the province. A hostel in the City of Calgary was built about the same time. These two hostels in the large urban centres were originally intended to provide temporary food, shelter and clothing to unemployed, employable single homeless men. Two other hostels were established, one at Youngstown and the other at Gunn, to provide long term custodial care for unemployable single homeless men who did not qualify for a pension or assistance under some other program. No rehabilitation program has ever been undertaken at the Provincial Hostels. At the time of this research the Provincial Single Men's Hostel in Edmonton had two social workers on staff to insure that the food, clothing and health needs of the men using the hostel were being looked after.

In 1961 an extension was added to the original hostel bringing

³The writer obtained most of his information through personal interviews with officials of the Government of Alberta.

See also Justice O'Byrne, "Report of the Inquiry Into Services for Single Transient Men in Edmonton" (Edmonton, May 7, 1970). (Mimeographed).

the accommodation up to about 300 beds. In addition to the sleeping capacity at the hostel, the Department of Social Development rents space from the Salvation Army Hostel, and a number of cheaper hotels and rooming houses in the Boyle Street area to accommodate the overflow. Total accommodation through the Department of Social Development is about 700 beds. Other facilities at the Provincial Single Men's Hostel include a dining room with a seating capacity of 108 men, a reading room, laundry facilities, a T.V. lounge and the only de-lousing facility in the city.

Marian Centre.⁴ On May 31, 1955, the Marian Centre, initially sponsored by Madonna House, a religious order of the Roman Catholic Church opened its doors to meet the needs of the rising tide of unemployed transients in the city. The primary function of the Marian Centre was to act as a redistribution centre for contributions of food, clothing, money, etc. to supplement the services provided by other agencies and institutions catering to the single homeless man.

The original Marian Centre was located on 103 Avenue and 96 Street. In 1957 it was moved to the present location at 10528 - 98 Street. The original two converted houses were replaced by a dining hall and a service wing in 1961. A chapel, a recreation/T.V. room and

⁴The writer obtained most of his information through personal interviews with officials from the Marian Centre staff. For written references the Marian Centre sends out an annual letter to prospective contributors to their program and a number of scrap books are available in the Marian Centre library.

See also: The Edmonton Journal, April 5, 1969, p. 1.

City Centre Co-operative Club, public relations material, one page. (Mimeographed).

meeting rooms were added in 1964. The major assistance provided at the Marian Centre is their mid-day feeding program. This noon meal complements the breakfast and evening meals served at the Provincial Single Men's Hostel. In addition to the noon meal the recreation room is open during the day. Film programs, Alcoholic Anonymous meetings and meetings of the City Centre Co-op Club, an organization made up of transients, are held in the recreation room in the evenings. Under the sponsorship of the City Centre Co-op Club a leadership course was held in the recreation room one night a week over the winter of 1969-70.

The Edmonton Day Centre.⁵ On the initiative of the United Church, All Peoples' Mission (Bissel Centre) a number of community minded persons established the Edmonton Day Centre Society in 1962. The Society is directed by a board representative of all walks of society. The objects of the society summarized briefly are to operate a centre or centres where services by way of counselling and means of recreation, diversion, rest and relaxation may be provided to indigent men, to act as an agency for the identification and classification of such men, and to assess their potential for improvement and/or rehabilitation, re-education, or re-training, and to establish a research program to develop effective methods of assisting them and to monitor community resources required to meet the needs of these men.

⁵The writer obtained most of his information through personal interviews with staff at the Edmonton Day Centre. For written references see: The Edmonton Day Centre "Annual Reports 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969". (Edmonton 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969). (Mimeographed).

Reverend W. Stewart and others, "A Sociological and Psychological Study of 137 Homeless Unemployed Men" (Edmonton Day Centre Summer Research Study, 1964). (Mimeographed). The Edmonton Journal, March 3, 1967, p. 38.

The Edmonton Day Centre opened its doors on January 8, 1963 in the old Polish Veteran's Hall located at 10628 - 96 Street. Since that time the Day Centre has operated primarily as a recreation centre for men to go to during the day. From time to time different members on staff have carried out research projects and attempts have been made to provide individual counselling to men using the centre's facilities. The most recent research project was carried out in the spring of 1970 by Mr. Alfred Riedigar, a graduate student in the Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta.

In November 1969 the Edmonton Day Centre took over the services of the Overnight Shelter Society which had been providing emergency overnight shelter for those men who for one reason or another could not afford to pay for accommodation and could not get into one of the hostels.

The Edmonton Day Centre provides space for office and examination rooms for the Student Health In Practice (S.H.I.P.) Clinic as well.

Bissel Centre.⁶ One of the older private agencies in the Boyle Street area, the Bissel Memorial Institute, now known as the Bissel Centre opened its doors in 1936. It was initially sponsored by the Board of Home Missions of the United Church to carry out inner city relief and mission work. The Bissel Centre subsequently has also been obtaining support from the United Community Fund, private donations and other Protestant churches. The work of the Centre is primarily community oriented. Two of their major projects include work with old age pensioners, many of them single males on war pension or some form of social security, and a native women's organization.

⁶The writer obtained most of his information from personal interviews with Bissel Centre staff.

Assistance to transient men although always part of their program has expanded considerably since the early 1950's. Much of this work is in response to the needs of single homeless men who come to the Centre.

Assistance in the form of emergency food, shelter and clothing is available through counsellors at the Centre. As well as providing this temporary assistance the counsellors are very active in placing men who want to work into jobs in industry and supporting these men through individual counselling once they have jobs.

Hope Mission.⁷ One of the few relief agencies established during the depression years, which is still in operation today, is the Hope Mission. In 1930 the Mission opened its doors in its first home just north of the C.N. Tracks on 101st Street. The Mission could accommodate twenty men for overnight lodging and provided food, clothing and spiritual assistance to many more. Now the Hope Mission is sponsored by a consortium of Evangelical Protestant Churches. It moved to its present location on 97th Street beside the post office in 1953. At present the Mission provides clothing to the men on request and sandwiches and hot tea after the evening service. Attendance at the service averages around 110 per night. In the words of one of the ministers at the Mission:

We don't offer the beds and the meals that some of the other agencies can, but we've been open every night of the year for the

⁷Much of the information concerning the Mission work is taken from interviews with ministers, priests, and preachers encountered while the research was being carried out. Notable among these was Reverend John Edward McEwan (Scotty) presently resident preacher at the Hope Mission. Scotty came over from Scotland in 1926. He had been an iron worker in a ship yard until his drinking problem caused him to be fired. Scotty was "saved", and his drinking problem cured. He has been active in Mission work for nearly forty years in and around the city.

last 40 years and we do our best to show these men that there really is someone here who cares.

The Hope Mission will be closing in mid July to move to a new location on 99th Street and 106th Avenue, from which they hope to expand to include a rehabilitation program.

Health Needs

In addition to these agencies and institutions servicing the basic needs of the single homeless men, a number of agencies provide services which cater to the more complex needs. Alcoholism and other illnesses and disabilities prevent many men on skid row from leading what, by middle class standards, would be considered a normal life. Below are some of the agencies and institutions which cater to the health needs of the single, unemployed, homeless man.

Hospitals. The main hospital servicing the Boyle Street area is the Royal Alexandra. For normal sickness and injuries the service there is available. For health problems related to alcoholism the Royal Alexandra does not have the facilities necessary for proper detoxification and treatment.

Health Clinics. A private clinic is located in the area which provides general out-patient care and counselling and out-patient treatment for addiction to drugs and alcohol. This clinic has been operating under various names and in various locations throughout the Boyle Street area for the past four years.⁸

⁸See: The Edmonton Journal, January 20, 1970
The Edmonton Journal, May 7, 1970
The Edmonton Journal, May 4, 1970

S.H.I.P. Medical Clinic. This clinic is located on the upper floor of the Edmonton Day Centre. Services provided through the clinic are primarily emergency first aid and medical examinations. Any serious cases are referred to a hospital. The clinic is operated by medical students from the University of Alberta, under the supervision of qualified medical practitioners. The clinic opened during the summer of 1969.

Legal Services

Student Legal Services. Law students from the Faculty of Law, University of Alberta, provide legal advice to men who either do not qualify or are unfamiliar with the Provincial Legal Aid Scheme at the District Court House. If possible the cases which do qualify are referred to Legal Aid.

Facilities for Treatment of Alcoholism

Hospitals. An intensive treatment in-patient hospital for people suffering from alcoholism is located one and one-half miles north of the Alberta Hospital, Oliver on Highway 21. The capacity at Henwood⁹ is 50. For reasons not fully understood by the writer Henwood will not take alcoholics until after a certain detoxification or drying out period. Henwood does not have facilities necessary for detoxification.

Division of Alcoholism.¹⁰ The Division of Alcoholism has a

⁹See public relations material on Henwood Alcoholism Rehabilitation Centre, Edmonton.

¹⁰Personal interviews with official of the Division of Alcoholism and users of the facility.

special section to deal with the skid row alcoholic. Men from skid row have access to Division of Alcoholism Counsellors through the Day Treatment Centre in the basement of the Division of Alcoholism Building. Through this Centre skid row alcoholics have quicker access to the in-patient treatment centre at Henwood or the Belmont Halfway House after discharge from an institution after a period of sobriety.

The writer discovered the Division of Alcoholism quite by accident. He was looking through the telephone book at the time. The Day Treatment Centre is situated about a mile away from the skid row district. In the four months the writer carried out his field work he did not come across a single reference to the Division of Alcoholism except through professional counsellors in the social agencies.

Institutional Care.¹¹ For many skid row alcoholics the only available route to treatment is through spending some time in a custodial institution such as a mental hospital or a gaol. Usually treatment under such circumstances is quite harsh. Such treatment too often has temporary effects as the opportunities to live a life style away from the influence of alcohol are very limited after release from an institutional situation back onto the street. The Belmont Rehabilitation Centre, a minimal security prison which provides rehabilitation services to prisoners with alcoholism problems, appears to be part of the answer. Again however, this treatment tends to be very temporary unless followed up by more opportunity to get off of skid row once a man is released from such an institution.

One agency which may possibly help to provide such opportunity

¹¹See John Howard Society public relations material.

is Future Society. This is an organization made up of inmates and ex-inmates from the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol. The object of Future is to provide an environment into which a person being released from an institution can find alternatives to going back to the life style which lead to his incarceration.

Project Recovery. Edmonton's only detoxification centre was started in 1968 as a one man operation by an ex-store detective from a department store on 97th Street. Since it started Project Recovery has made various appeals for assistance from funding sources. To date no continuous source of support has been arranged. At the time this research was carried out Project Recovery was working with a medical clinic in the skid row area which provided out-patient care to chronic alcoholics. It had a house away from the skid row which operated as a temporary residence for men during the required detoxification period before the men were qualified to enter the Henwood Alcoholic Treatment Centre, for men who had recently been through the treatment at Henwood as well as some of the patients undergoing treatment at the out-patient clinic mentioned above. The capacity of this halfway house facility was between fifteen and twenty-five.

Alcoholics Anonymous. The A. A. program has elements of group support similar to the organization Future Society mentioned above. The ritual at times appears to be almost religious. On skid row the reaction to a question about A.A. was very mixed. A number of locations where meetings were held regularly were posted around. Meetings attendance appeared to be limited to small close-knit groups of around ten to fifteen people

Employment Needs. Employment is perhaps the last thing many of the men on skid row think about. Finding a permanent job becomes a real need only after a man's survival needs are met. Temporary jobs to earn money for immediate needs were as close as many of the men encountered during the research period, got to providing enough income to look after themselves.

In order to understand the employment picture facing the transient men, some of the major institutions involved in placing semi-skilled and unskilled labour in the Boyle Street area were investigated. By far the largest percentage of men appear to be placed through the private hiring offices of companies looking for seasonal labour. Canada Manpower Centre is another source of jobs both for work in the city and bush camp jobs in the north. For the home guard that can no longer do heavy labour for a whole season in the bush, a number of temporary placement services hire the men for 'spot jobs' in the city which may take only a few hours or days. Another avenue to a job is through the employment services offered through the private social agencies in the city.

These four seem to be the main categories of placement service for the unemployed transient men.

Private Companies

The employment offices of companies in private industry take men directly off the street and into a job. This direct hiring is usually arranged on the initiative of the men themselves. Sometimes if an employer needs a sizeable number of men, he may phone one of the hostels in town and have it announced that the agency is in the market for men. The men can then contact the employment offices directly. Most of these jobs are 'out of town' jobs working on construction, oil field work,

mining, logging and so forth. The major qualifications are a strong back and relatively good health.

Even though most of these jobs are unskilled or semi-skilled, the employers try to hire on men who have worked for them on previous occasions. This way they maintain some sort of continuity in their seasonal labour. The men returning to work with a known employer take less time to orient themselves to the supervisory personnel. On the job the men often work in teams. If four men, who have worked with each other before, apply together, they will be taken ahead of four individuals who don't know each other. By maintaining contact with some good former employees over the off season, the company has the contacts to hire on a labour force in short order and begin the job when jobs open up after spring break up, freeze up, or whenever the contracts come through.

Most of these companies have an employment office in the city. Those who don't have a local office, work through Canada Manpower Centre. Many employers prefer not to work through Canada Manpower Centre. They claim that rounding up a labour crew directly produces a much more reliable crew in less time. When a new job opens up, and the company needs men, the local office contacts a number of ex-employees in the city. This starts a rumor on the skid row grapevine. The word is soon passed by word of mouth over bar tables, across restaurant counters, down the soup lines, across the card tables and T.V. lounges in skid row establishments. Those men who are looking for work make their way down to the Revillon Building, 10221 - 104 Street, where many of these hiring offices are located. When jobs open up in the spring the rumors are rampant. After a meeting at the Hope Mission one night last spring, a number of men were in groups talking about the jobs opening up. Over

the course of an hour there and a few drinks in and around the Ritz Hotel, the author was offered more than a dozen 'hot tips' on jobs that had just opened up or were soon to be opening up in the north. Talking with some of these men later the writer found that as a rule the younger, healthier men have a much better chance of being hired on than the men over 40 whose prime labouring days are over. Although many of the men who are applying for these labour and semi-skilled jobs in the north were from the skid row area, it would be wrong to say that most of the men who take up these bush camp jobs for the season become recipients of welfare services in the off season after they have parted with their money. Many of the middle class citizens of our country made their start working for 'big money' up in the north. Many of the younger men who go up have thier own car and bachelor apartments away from skid row to come back to when they get out of the bush. The writer met a number of men in this category. They had very little that was good to say about skid row. Sometimes these fellows over spend a bit during their off season and end up on the skids temporarily until they get another job in the north. When a man does this he has usually taken the first step of the ladder down into skid row. Each time he comes back to town he's going to spend his money that much more quickly. Many of the men the writer got to know were waiting for a buddy to come into town from a job in the north so they could have a party together. Each time a man's money doesn't last between jobs the more he has to spend the next time to show his friends that he made up for his temporary stay on the skids the time before.

The period of time spent on the skids between jobs gets longer as the worker gets older. When he finally can't get out to the bush anymore he joins the home guard and waits for a buddy to come in off a job in the north so they can have a big party.

One fellow the writer encountered on a spot job was just starting through the cycle. He has this story to tell.

I was born with an itchy foot. I have been working on the rigs since I was 18. My first job was driving the water truck. I can do any kind of a job on a rig. For three years I was overseas on the rigs in Arabia. I've made big money and I've spent big money. December 23rd I came to town with \$6,000.00, I rented a floor in the Commercial Hotel and we had one hell of a party. I started this morning with this temporary outfit with 2¢ and a pack of cigarettes. I'm just waiting for a call from the outfit I worked for last year. I've got to keep away from this temporary stuff, its bad for your record.

When I asked him what he would do in another 10 years when he was 45 he said:

Oh hell I will always be able to get a good job. My work record with all these companies is good. I've never been flown out for drinking or gambling. I have enough contacts to get a good job until I'm dead.¹²

This fellow had taken the first step down what could be a long road to dependence. He'd stayed overnight in the hostel and that morning was the first time he'd ever picked up peanut butter sandwiches at the Marian Centre for lunch.

Like most business men the owners and operators of the 'big money jobs' base their hiring policy on the best man they can get for their money. If a man is a stable, quick thinking, hard working type, they are not concerned about his personal life during the off season. Depending on the price of the labour and the profits involved, some business men will make do with any kind of labour force. At a conference of business men last summer, the writer talked with one man about hiring

¹²From a personal interview with the informant.

some of the less stable workers from skid row. His comment¹³ was:

You give me the lumber contract and I'll work with these guys even if it means that I have to keep a payroll of 76 men to keep my sawmill running. You can't whip these guys into working, you have to take them as they come.

The normal payroll for an operation of the size this man was talking about would be 7-10 men. His is what is called a 'shoe string outfit'. The men shy away from this type of operation unless they have no alternatives. One man commenting on a similar situation had this story to tell.

The foreman picked us up off the street in front of the Ritz on a Monday and offered us two months of work cutting down trees on the flood plane behind one of the hydro power dams. We were really stuck for a job so we went up with him the next day. He dropped a crew of five of us in the bush with chain saws, for which we had signed our lives away, and told us to go to work. We worked in that bush for six weeks with two crews of Indians. He had a foreman who came around with supplies every few days. Six weeks after we started the foreman stopped coming around. When the food ran out, we figured we had been screwed, so we hitched our way back into town with the chain saws and \$50.00 a piece that the foreman had given us at the end of the first month. The Indians took off the other way with the tent and the remainder of the supplies.¹⁴

At the time I talked to this chap he was working for a temporary employment agency. He would like to have taken his case to court but his employer couldn't be found and he probably had no money anyway!

Canada Manpower Centre

Canada Manpower Centre (C.M.C.) is another major source of employment opportunities for the transient man. Especially for the younger and more healthy men, the C.M.C. acts as a clearing house for 'out of town jobs' in the oil fields, northern mines and so on. To many

¹³Personal interview, Field Diary, July, 1969.

¹⁴From a personal interview with an informant.

of the men on the 'skids', the services offered by C.M.C. are pretty much irrelevant because they don't have the time to go through the red tape required to make the right contact with an employer.

The Department of Manpower and Immigration was created by Federal legislation in 1966. The department linked up the offices of the National Employment Service with the Canada Immigration Act for the purpose of monitoring and facilitating adjustments in Canada's labour force as necessitated by changing conditions in Canada's economy.

The Canada Manpower Division decentralized and extended the program of the National Employment Services through a network of Canada Manpower Centres. The main functions of the Canada Manpower Centres are four fold:¹⁵

- 1) to assist workers by providing referral and placement services and by training and mobility programs;
- 2) to assist employees by providing recruitment and selection services;
- 3) to assist in collecting and interpreting information about the local labour market;
- 4) to advise and assist companies and agencies concerned with any aspect of utilization and development.

C.M.C. has two offices in Edmonton which are quite accessible to transient men. The main office is in the Centennial Building, 10015 - 103 Avenue, and a sub-office located on 97th Street and 102 Avenue. The 97th Street office operates a day labour pool for spot jobs. This day labour pool is operated on a request basis and refers only casual labour to the prospective employer. The only regulation C.M.C. has regarding employment of day labourers is the minimum wage law which sets the minimum

¹⁵Department of Manpower and Immigration, Canada, Annual Report, 1966-67, (Queen's Printer).

wage at \$1.40 per hour. Compensation for accidents etc. are the responsibility of the employer. Because of the lack of services offered to the casual employees through the casual labour pool such as transportation, bus tickets, work clothes, hard hats, and a daily advance, it is difficult for a transient man to find useful employment through this office. One man expressed the sentiments of many of the men talked to about the day labour pool when he commented on the posting of "No Loitering" signs in the alley near the door of the casual labour office, "It's bad enough those government men doing nothing to find us jobs. Now they don't even want to see us around here."¹⁶ No seating provisions are made there for men who have to wait on the street or in the alley for work or interviews.

The main office of the C.M.C. deals with all types of manpower requirements. The procedure on the part of the employer is to place an order for whatever number of men in whatever job classification he requires and a C.M.C. counsellor will fill the order from the stock of applications in each category. The specific conditions of the job contract such as wages etc. with the exception of those required by law etc. are worked out between the prospective employee and employer. The C.M.C. office, after processing and selecting suitable candidates, refers them to the employer to be hired. At the discretion of the employment counsellor, a prospective employee can be assisted through grants and/or loans to travel to other areas to look for, take up or receive special training courses through C.M.C.'s Manpower Mobility Program. Under their Occupation Training for Adults Program and various arrangements with Provincial Technical and Vocational Training facilities, prospective

¹⁶Personal interview with an informant, Field Diary, July, 1969.

employees can be directed into upgrading and retraining programs. Allowances up to \$90.00 per month can be provided depending on the particular circumstances. Various winter employment campaigns to help alleviate off season unemployment are sponsored by C.M.C. as well.

Although in theory all of these facilities are available to everyone, facilities for providing C.M.C. assistance in the area of employment, upgrading and retraining geared to the special circumstance of single unemployed men are not very well developed. Other than some programs for mobilizing large forces of unskilled labour such as to the irrigation areas in Southern Alberta and the referral service to companies operating in the north, C.M.C. facilities are not suited to the needs of the single homeless man.

To illustrate some of the difficulties the men have in trying to make use of the facilities C.M.C. has to offer, the experience of one man, met last summer, will be related. Al was met through a private employment agency. Both of us were working together on a small job, helping a university professor move his furniture into a house in Windsor Park. Al was 47, a veteran of World War II. He was in the army until 1959 when his war bride left him, taking with her all his belongings and their two children. After an out of court settlement, she paid him off with part of his own savings and he never saw her again. Out of the army with few skills, Al lived a relatively quiet life, doing unskilled labour at construction and warehousing jobs around the city. He had acquired enough money to buy a car which he eventually had to sell to cover debts. Until one year before our meeting, he had been living common law with a woman and older boy. Al had been supporting them on and off for the past six years. He spoke of this arrangement as insurance. When Al was really tight for a job, she would go on welfare

until Al was able to earn enough money so that he could support her again. Six months before we met Al had had an operation on his lower bowel. Since he got out of the hospital, he hadn't been able to do any heavy work he'd been used to. He could have taken a job which was not heavy work but he didn't have enough money to make it to the first pay check. He didn't go back to his common law wife because of difficulties with his step son. Al seemed to be a fairly intelligent man, a man who could have gone a long way if he had been given the chance. We talked about the facilities at C.M.C. He made an appointment to see a C.M.C. counsellor the next day. For the sake of interest the writer accompanied Al to the interview. Al was interested in the area of retraining so that he could get a fairly steady job and enough income to keep him off skid row. The counsellor went through a description of 17 retraining courses offered through manpower. Of these, 1/3 were for women. Of the others Al had the qualifications for three, a course in millwork, a carpentry course and a clerical course. He had done clerical work in the army. The counsellor advised against the clerical work because of the competition with female clerks. Of the other two he recommended that Al go to the main office in the Centennial Building and make application for the course in carpentry. After two hours and another lengthy interview at the main office, Al had an appointment to meet with a special counsellor the next day to discuss his situation further. The two hours of just sitting smoking 'rollies' in the sterile offices of the C.M.C. in our grubby clothes with all the well dressed clerks and secretaries and middle class citizens, looking at us was nearly as humiliating as the abruptness with which the counsellors and secretaries dealt with our growing file. All told, we had to explain our case to seven different people that afternoon. Al wasn't sure he could make it

back the next day but made the appointment anyway. If he had to miss a day of work, to make the appointment he would have to go to the hostel because he had no money and he said he didn't want that. As it turned out there was no work with the temporary employment agency the next day and Al got to his interview. He was accepted and put on the waiting list. The counsellor said the first opening would probably not be for nine months to one year. It was obvious to both of us that Canada Manpower didn't really have much to offer Al.

Some of the men interviewed about C.M.C. charged that C.M.C. personnel were discriminatory in their job referrals. One had this story.

I had a record of drinking on the job. I've got a clean license and I've been dry for a year. C.M.C. won't refer me to a job even though I have good references from my employers over the past year. In one case I found out about a job being referred through C.M.C. I went directly to the employer and explained my situation. The employer offered me the job. Shortly afterward he got a call from C.M.C. about a guy who was coming over for the job. He mentioned that he'd already given the job to me. When he got off the phone he said "I'm sorry but I can't give you the job." My friend here Jean Jacques is a little frenchman. They don't even look at him.¹⁷

Later the writer talked with a number of persons in the C.M.C. office about the use of their facilities by transient men. As one C.M.C. official put it¹⁸

C.M.C. is just not equipped to handle the transient men. Most of these men are poorly qualified and waiting lists for upgrading are a minimum of eight months long. The transient man may have two different jobs in that eight months and be gone when the course starts. Individual follow up of the type that is required cannot be done by C.M.C. However, to avoid misunderstandings more information about the program should be passed around so the men could see it. It should be laid out straight from the shoulder to the men what is expected of them right from the first interview.

¹⁷From a personal interview with an informant.

¹⁸From an interview with a C.M.C. official, June, 1969.

When this interview was discussed with some of the men one summed it up when he agreed with the theory but asked how in the meantime, while his waiting for his training was he going to live.

Temporary Employment Agencies

As a homeless man gets older, he finds he can no longer travel from city to city and job to job the way he used to. His health and his age, the assets he had which got him good jobs in the bush camps and on the oil rigs, become depleted and are liabilities that force him to be unemployed. If the isolation and monotony of a bush camp has driven him a little strange or an accident on the job has given him some disability, he joins the home guard that much sooner. The home guard as referred to in Nels Anderson's book The Hobo, is the last stop for many transients. Today it is estimated that more than two-thirds of the single homeless are members of the home guard.¹⁹ These are the men who have become almost totally dependent. Some depend on charity for food, clothing and shelter and never work. Others cling to the last of their pride and live from day to day taking jobs they can find, living off charity only when they have nowhere else to go.

These men and others like them who haven't yet become permanent skid row residents are the labour pool for the Private Temporary Employment Agencies.

Temporary Employment Agencies have been on the skid row scene almost since its inception. As indicated above their role has changed somewhat in that they no longer are involved in mass movements of

¹⁹Donald J. Bogue, *Skid Row in American Cities*, Chicago: Community and Family Study Centre, University of Chicago, 1963, p. 237.

transient and migratory workers. As the economy has become more stable, their role has shifted into filling the temporary manpower gaps which are experienced at the individual firm level. As a source of temporary help, they increase the efficiency of the firm by providing labour during short peak periods alleviating the necessity of employing extra staff to compensate for peak periods and avoiding unnecessarily high labour costs through overtime employment of the firms regular employees. Another function, which is little publicized, is the role they play in providing a relatively constant supply of labour for those jobs which are characterized by a high turn over of personnel. It is this function which had led more than one writer to refer to these jobs as the bottom of the employment ladder. They are hard, dirty, uninteresting and underpaid. The middle class looks on these jobs with contempt. So does the skid row man, only he has no other alternatives before him.

The men of the home guard adjust to their jobs in different ways. To most of those met, the job was not an end in itself but only a fantasized means to some other end. Very often this end was a day dream, a vision of a small shop or a revenue house which could provide enough of an income that there would be no more need to get up at 6:00 a.m. No need to get down to the employment office toward the front of the line and wait for a job which could be anything from an outside back breaking, dirty, boring job like unloading a freight car in winter to an inside clean, lucrative job like doing inventory in a hardware wholesale, where one could steal enough to make up for the poor wages. To some, the job was a means to get the money to have a drunk all weekend, or pay off a loan to get back into the hostel or keep the money lenders off your back. The owners and operators, claim these spot jobs are a stepping stone to get a man off the skids, to give him a stake so he can last to the first

pay check on a regular job, to keep him going until he gets a good job up north, to give him a start after he's been released from some gaol.

To say it can't be done might be presumptuous but having heard a lot of men say "these jobs are not a stepping stone, they are a dead end". Experience with some spot jobs over the research period led the writer to a similar conclusion.

Spot jobs for most of the men who took them probably were a dead end. The amazing aspect of this fact was the way in which so many men adjusted to that dead end. One of the most satisfied with his job and life on skid row can be illustrated by the case of Hugh.

Hugh was single, he'd never married, although he'd lived common law with various 'girl friends' over the past six years that he'd been in Edmonton. Before coming to Edmonton he'd been farming, first for his mother and then when she died, for different people all over Alberta and Saskatchewan. He has made three trips up north, twice as a cook and once as a labourer on a construction outfit. Each time when he got back to town, he'd blown his money on a wild drinking spree. Hugh won't go back up because as he puts it "there is no sense in making a pile in the bush just so you can blow it when you get back to town is there?"²⁰ Hugh is a 'regular' at one of the private temporary employment agencies. According to his employer he's been there for years. "Every weekend he gets lit up but he's back to work on Monday morning."²¹

Hugh has a well developed routine that he follows in his life. Every day he works he draws \$4.00 advance which is taken off his pay at the end of the week. He eats a good breakfast in one of the cafes on 97th Street. He has a glass of water for coffee breaks, his lunch costs

²⁰This comment by Hugh was echoed by many of the men the writer came to know during his research.

²¹The policy of this particular employment agency was to accept

him under a dollar and he makes his own supper. His room costs him \$1.50 per night and he pays this every Friday before he gets drunk. If possible he rents a room in a private rooming house. He doesn't like the government hostels or the 'Sally Ann' because they don't allow any visitors. Hugh prides himself in the fact that he's never had to sleep on the river bank and that he can budget his money out over the week even though he has to give up the odd meal and his coffee breaks to do it.

Hugh's work habits were very well adapted to the type of jobs he gets to do. Hugh did his best to keep from getting the heavy jobs, most of the jobs he took were considered good jobs. He explained the rules of keeping a good job and making a good job last, a good job being light work, inside away from the dust and dirt.

Number one you always have to keep something to do no matter how close you are to being finished so that when the foreman comes around you can be busy doing something. That way you get a good recommendation to the boss.

Number two never do anything you aren't told to do, that way you never get into trouble for doing something wrong.²²

Hugh reminded one very much of the man who had been hired by the farmer to pick rocks all day. He did such a good job that the farmer gave him an easier job, sorting potatoes. The man finally had to quite because it was too difficult for him to make all those decisions.

As mentioned previously Hugh was probably the most satisfied person the writer encountered. He didn't talk much about the future nor the past. He was interested primarily in the present. He'd learned to survive at the bottom, in relative comfort and with a certain degree of independence.

the men for what they were. It made no attempt to change the attitudes or interfere with the lives of its employees in any way.

²² Hugh's attitude is very similar to the anti-establishment view of a bureaucrat who's major concern is to sit behind a desk and pass off as much responsibility as possible.

There are four temporary employment agencies in the City of Edmonton which cater directly to the single homeless man. The casual employment office operated by C.M.C. is one of these. It's operation differs somewhat from the other three. Of the other three, two are local offices of international companies, Industrial Overload and Manpower Services. One, Central Personnel Services, is an Edmonton based firm.

There is much confusion about how Temporary Employment Services are set up and how they operate in the private sector. The general procedure by which an employment agency assists Joe Worker and Company X in getting together is this. Company X needs temporary help. If it is in the unskilled or semi-skilled category, chances are the employment agency can supply it. In some cases skilled craftsmen can be supplied. Most agencies supply three or four categories of labour: 1) general labour to do light unskilled types of jobs; 2) unskilled labour for heavy jobs or experienced labour to do jobs which may require some experience such as warehousing; 3) semi-skilled labour, truck drivers, carpenters helpers; 4) semi-skilled labour with special skills, e.g. specific types of labour required around oil field equipment.

Company X orders a specific type of labourer from the agency. Meanwhile Joe Worker is sitting around in the agency lounge watching T.V., reading the paper or playing cards to while away the time. When the agency man gets an order, he announces through the office wicket the need for a man to work for Company X doing a particular job. Joe Worker wants the job so he comes to the wicket. If he hasn't already registered with the agency, he does so. The agency man puts his name and number on an invoice and Joe then becomes an employee of the agency.

If he needs some money to last him until his first pay check at the end of the week, he can take out an advance of from \$2.00 - \$4.00 per day depending on the agency and the circumstance. If special clothes, coveralls, gloves, equipment, etc. are required to do the job, these are usually supplied on a loan or purchase basis by the agency. If the man needs a ride to the job, the agency may either give them a ride in a company car, call a taxi or issue bus tickets. This ensures that the man who has taken out an advance actually does get to the job. The charges can be taken out of his weekly pay check. While on the job, Joe Worker is supervised and directed by someone from Company X. At the end of the day or the job this supervisor marks up Joe's time sheet. If the job continues more than one day, Joe can go directly to Company X the second day. He needn't show up at the employment agency in the morning unless he needs an advance. When the job is over, Joe is no longer an employee of the agency and is on his own until another job comes up. At the end of each seven day period the agency pays Joe his earnings less his advances and the deductions required by law.

When Joe becomes an employee of the agency, the agency becomes an employee of Company X.

It is to the advantage of Company X to hire the agency rather than to maintain sufficient staff in their personnel department to handle the extra load during peak periods when the Company requires temporary help. The agency being the employer assumes all employer responsibilities such as documentation, records and all remittances and reports according to Federal and Provincial employment and tax regulations. This administrative cost is duplicated when the agency

becomes an employee of Company X but since the name of the employee doesn't change each time, the added load on the personnel department is minimal. The agency has a large labour pool from which to draw on. The manager of the agency can get to know his men and better match the particular man with the job suited to him, thus ensuring a more reliable source of labour to Company X.

The mark-up from what the agency pays Joe and what Company X pays the agency varies from 50% to 60%. This means that at a 57% mark-up, which is the usual mark-up, Company X would pay \$2.35 per hour to the agency. In turn Joe would receive \$1.50 per hour leaving 85¢ to the agency to cover their profit and costs.

This mark-up which a private employment agency has to charge to cover its expenses depends on the volume of business it is turning over. In order to increase their volume some employment agencies are offering attractive personnel lease back arrangements to companies employing seasonal or temporary help for periods of over one month. The procedure is essentially the same as the short term temporary help except that with seasonal workers the basic wage rates are higher. In order to cover their costs then, the agencies don't require the same mark-up. The mark-up ranges around 25%. A season worker earning a basic wage of \$2.00 would cost the company \$2.50 having 50¢ to cover the necessary unemployment insurance, holiday pay, Canada Pension, etc. deductions plus overhead and profit. At this mark-up the agency is competing very well with the mark-up the company would have to charge had they taken on additional staff to handle seasonal workers. Besides this, leasing personnel can be considered a service and is income tax deductible. If the same agency continues to deal in short term casual labour, the added

overhead and risk through hiring some of the less stable employees could be covered by the increased total payroll volume. This means the agency could then pay the 'boys in the back room', the guys least likely to get a permanent job, higher hourly wages.

In order to operate a casual, long term temporary and seasonal employment service to the benefit of all concerned, the companies through lower administrative costs, the agency through higher profits and the worker through higher hourly wages, a private employment agency must have the necessary flexibility to 'wheel and deal'. It is interesting to note that two of the three agencies operating private temporary help in Edmonton have their home offices in the United States. The local manager is usually paid a fixed wage. His interest in building up the company image is usually minimal. As an ex-employee of one of these agencies put it²³

If we have to run an employment office dealing all the time with people according to a set of regulations sent out from head office, how can we be expected to treat our men like humans?

Since temporary employment agencies first became a part of skid row they have been accused of taking advantage of the men who live there. Like most individuals involved in business the men who operate temporary employment agencies can be viewed as acting in their own self interests. But they cannot afford to damage their own business by making the jobs they offer so uncomfortable that no one will come to work for them. The attitude of most of the employers is illustrated in the following comments by workers from temporary employment agencies.²⁴ "The guys

²³Personal interview with an informant.

²⁴Personal interview with staff of the employment agency.

who work here have to be treated like human beings. We treat them fair but firm." "These guys have pride, if they don't feel they can handle a job they won't take it."

In strictly economic terms the temporary employment agency provides a much needed service both to industry by supplying a much needed source of temporary labour and to the men by providing a source of employment which takes into account only the present and the future with no regard to the past. It serves to link men as they are, to work as it is needed.

Some very interesting insights into the way of life of men on skid row were related by managers of private employment agencies. One manager related to the writer some of his experiences.

We get all kinds of men working out of here but most of the men who come in do want to work. We get a certain percentage of 'bums' in too. These are the guys who will take us for all they can. They walk off with advances and equipment and never show up for the job. Most of them come back though and when they do we give them a job, even if it is only to get our advance back. Most of these 'no shows' occur on Saturdays or Mondays when the guys have no money coming to them after pay day on Friday. (A check of one agency's files showed 14 no shows in 1800 man days of work). We have three main types of men coming through here. Most of them fit into the category of the permanent temporary worker who never does have a full time job but stays in the city or the off season temporary worker who is with us for only a few months when there are no jobs available up north. The real transient doesn't come in much.

The permanent temporary workers are guys who value their independence and don't for any one of a number of reasons want to take on permanent employment. They may have a wife chasing them for alimony. Maybe they have a drug or an alcohol problem. Some of them can satisfy their needs working temporarily, and have no reason to earn more. Most of these men are older. They can out-produce the younger men, are less accident prone and more reliable on the job. When they say they are going to work, they go and they stay on the job until it is over. The permanent temporary worker has a special skill which cannot be equalled by a novice. He can unload a box car faster, carry drywall the right way and he has the versatility to do many jobs that a company would normally have to hire in a man with a specialty to do. We have a number of 'regulars' working out of here who work like a dog all week just so they can get

drunk on the weekend. But they always manage to show up on Monday morning ready to go to work. The men who are just with us for a few weeks or months have usually been laid off for a few months in the off season. Some of these men would rather work here than go on welfare or collect unemployment insurance. Of course we get the guys who need just a few more stamps before they can start to collect unemployment insurance as well. Some guys work part time to supplement their welfare payments. We have a lot more guys who just want to make enough money to get good and drunk so they can stay happy until their next stint up in the bush.

The other kind of worker we get is the guy between jobs. Some of these are real transients but most of them are working part time to keep body and soul together while they look for another job.

Often temporary employment is the chance for a man to save up enough so he can make it to the first pay check on a permanent job. Some of the guys we get in are union men out of work. They sure don't have much to say for the union working their regular men overtime, then charging the guys out of work union dues but not getting them jobs.²⁵

As for the solutions to the difficulties their employees are faced with, one agency person had this to offer.

The solution is a system like Alcoholics Anonymous. Put these guys together and they will look after each other. Maybe this would help to avoid a situation we had here last week. We finally got this guy a permanent job. He had a lousy record but he wanted to work full time. When he got the job he was so excited he went for one drink. It ended up in a binge. He lost his job and we lost some of our reputation. We have to show these men how to look after their money. If most of these men collected a \$300.00 pay check at the end of the month, they wouldn't know what to do with it. That's why we give daily advances and pay them once a week.²⁶

The variation in attitude from one temporary employment agency to the next was considerable. Only one of the agencies the writer was in contact with seemed to have a genuine concern for the welfare of their clients beyond a very business like relationship in which the major concern of the agency was to protect its own interests.

²⁵This opinion was taken from a number of interviews with personnel from this agency.

²⁶Personal interview, Field Diary, August, 1969.

Social Agency Employment Activities

The fourth avenue to a job for the man on skid row is through the employment service of one of the private social agencies. This service is operated in different ways depending on the agency. Most agencies do have an employment counsellor of sorts. This person may be in charge of a number of other things as well. One agency, the Marian Centre, operates its employment service through the City Centre Co-op Club. The Club²⁷ was formed in February 1965 "for the purpose of promoting a spirit of co-operation among men and establishing mutual assistance programs." Since it started its employment service in March, 1966, the Club claims to have found about 5000 casual and permanent jobs for its members. The employment service is operated out of an office in the Marian Centre by an office manager paid a small honourarium by the Club. The office manager takes orders for jobs on the Club phone. The general conditions for obtaining temporary help through the Club are \$1.50 per hour plus transportation and equipment supplied by the employer. The Club operates on a referral basis so that minimal documentation is necessary. From time to time the office manager contacts prospective employers to solicit jobs. As well, the employment service is frequently advertised in the Edmonton Journal.

The role of the employment counsellor in most private social agencies is similar to that of an employment counsellor for C.M.C. The major difference is in the private agencies employment counsellor's ability to arrange for food, clothing and shelter while a suitable job is located for his client. Many counsellors consider this to be the major key to their success in placing men in good jobs. One counsellor described

²⁷City Centre Co-operative Club, "Information Sheet", (Mimeographed).

his operation this way.

We are not primarily religion oriented like some of the agencies down here. We are human beings and we treat our clients like human beings. I have been operating this placement service for about three years now and I place on the average about two men per day. I don't advertise so I guess most of the men who come have heard about me from their friends. I do get some referrals from other agencies but I am very careful when I counsel people to make sure that they are only getting assistance from one agency. When a man comes in, I try not to go by first impression. I try to be realistic and look at them as a prospective employer would and I point this out to the man. If a fellow has hair that is too long he just has to get it cut. No matter how many good things a fellow has going for him like brains, health or what have you, it is not the good things that the employer looks at. It's the bad things. So I try to get these fellows some clean decently fitting clothes, have them cut their hair and wash up a bit before I try to get them a job. Sometimes I have to spend quite a bit of time just getting these fellows in condition. I can supply them with some food and a place to stay if they need it, until they get a job. I will work with a man until he refuses to co-operate and then I have to say I'm sorry.

For jobs I have contacts, most of them personal contacts that I have developed over the past few years to whom I have sent men before. If a man has any special talents, I do my best to place him where he can get more training and experience in his line. Usually if a man sticks with me long enough to get him a job he will stay on the job when he gets it.²⁸

A less intensive type of employment service is offered through the agencies operating hostels or day care facilities. Very often employers will call these establishments looking for labour. Usually someone in the agency has the responsibility of announcing or posting these opportunities. It is up to the individual alone then to make contact with the employer.

The activity of social agencies in the field of employment is quite limited in terms of the number of job placements made. Perhaps the major reason for this is the lack of resources most agencies have to hire on the necessary staff to handle employment counselling. In the writer's opinion a much more intensive approach to promoting independence

²⁸From a number of interviews with a counsellor from one of the private social agencies.

through retraining and upgrading and employment counselling is necessary if the agencies and institutions in the Boyle Street area are to perform anything more than a maintenance role to promote their own existence and the existence of skid row.

Summary and Evaluation

There are a number of agencies and institutions catering to the needs of the single homeless men in the Boyle Street area. These needs may be broken down into three major categories: basic food, clothing and shelter needs, health and legal needs, and employment needs.

The services and programs of the largest proportion of these agencies and institutions was directed toward meeting the basic maintenance needs. Of the five or six major institutions in the area only one, the Salvation Army was actively engaged in a rehabilitation program. There is some question in the writer's mind whether this particular rehabilitation program is designed to prepare the men, who go through the program, for a more independent life style suited to their needs in this world or whether this rehabilitation program is a last minute preparation for some other world. Despite this writer's skepticism with regard to the quality of the program, the Salvation Army does deserve credit for at least attempting to meet some of the more complex needs on skid row.

One other agency which tried to meet some of these needs was the Bissel Centre. Although the counsellors there seemed to have the ability to meet some of the employment needs of the men, the resources available to do this work limited very much their scale of operation. The necessary follow up required to ensure the independence of the men placed in jobs was not carried out.

When the writer met with officials of the other major institutions, the officials from the Provincial Single Men's Hostel operated by the Department of Social Development were the only ones who did not claim that the function of their institution was rehabilitation oriented. The services offered at this institution were strictly maintenance oriented. Between the hours of 9:00 o'clock and 2:00 o'clock the men were barred from the hostel.

The services of the other agencies in the area seemed to be oriented toward providing the services which were not available through the Provincial Single Men's Hostel. Some of these services were paid for. Accommodation at the Salvation Army and a number of cheap hotels and rooming houses was paid for through Department of Social Development vouchers. Although the writer did not have the opportunity to examine the statistics it was common knowledge that during slack periods when the number of men in the city was low the facilities at the hostel were not used until a certain quota of men had been taken in at the cheaper rooming houses and the Salvation Army Hostel. The rationale for this was pure economics. If the Department of Social Development did not support the establishments which provided accommodation for the overflow from the Provincial Single Men's Hostel on a regular basis the owners would likely tear them down because no one else but men from skid row would take rooms in these hotels and rooming houses. The question arises as to whether the need for extra accommodation warrants the use of buildings which under normal circumstances would probably be closed by the fire department or the health inspector in lieu of the good facilities at the hostel just to ensure the availability of accommodation during peak period.

Health services to the single homeless men are paid for both through the Department of Social Development and the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan. Under the circumstances which existed during the research period there seemed to be no control over the quality of service the men were receiving from medical clinics in the area. One of the priority health needs of single homeless men is treatment for alcoholism. The existing treatment services available to the population of the city at large were generally unknown or inaccessible to the men. The facilities in the area did not seem to be either properly controlled or properly supported by health authorities. As a consequence the patients suffering from alcoholism received very minimal care. Facilities available to assist patients whose alcohol problem was temporarily arrested to move away from the pressures of the skid row area were virtually non-existent.

Some services offered by agencies definitely complemented those available through the Provincial Single Men's Hostel. The Marian Centre performed a useful function through the redistribution of food stuffs at their noon meal which the government institution would probably not have been able to use in their feeding program. Distribution of old clothing was a function of all of the major institutions. Shelter offered by the Edmonton Day Centre and the Marian Centre during the hours that the Provincial Hostel was not open or under circumstances which were not compatible with the policy regulations of the Department of Social Development complemented the services of the Salvation Army and the Provincial Single Men's Hostel.

The network of maintenance services in the City of Edmonton have given Edmonton the reputation for being one of the easiest cities in Canada in which a single homeless man could survive. In the writer's opinion

this reputation is justified. The question arises however whether meeting the basic needs is conducive to developing a viable community of single homeless men who can live relatively comfortably in our city with the independence they desire? As mentioned previously no agency appeared during the research period, to be involved at all in upgrading and retraining of the residents of the skid row area to prepare them for employment.

The agencies presently concerned with employment were in most instances part of a cycle which inevitably brought the men who took a job right back to skid row.

Many of the community workers involved with the men from the skid row area were part of this cycle too. The next chapter is an analysis of some of the activities of staff from the social agencies which catered to the needs of the men on skid row.

Chapter V
AN EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF COMMUNITY WORKERS
IN EDMONTON'S SKID ROW

The aspired goal of nearly all of the community workers encountered in the skid row community was the same. They all expressed some degree of concern over the plight of the transient man. Directly or indirectly they all seemed to feel they were involved in preparing the men for entrance back into the mainstream of society. No one ever really explained what was meant by the mainstream of society but all seemed to imply something close to middle class standards. Some of the characteristics associated with these standards might include good planning and management ability, the ability to postpone the satisfaction of immediate needs in favor of long term objectives, involvement in community organizations, adherence to the norms of hard work, cleanliness, sobriety and responsibility toward others and so on and so forth. Despite the commonality in certain basic attitudes toward skid row each community worker had his own particular orientation to the "problem".

Each worker had his own reasons for working in the area and his own approach to carrying out his work. A number of different types of workers could be discerned. The following discussion covers the three main types the writer observed. These were the conservative type who was often a hindrance to development because of his love for the status quo, the over-identifier who was usually suffering from so many personal identity problems that his work was ineffective or at best unpredictable, and the "helper" type who very often was a hindrance to the development process because he felt he knew more about life and its problems than

the men he was working with and the other type who did little to publicize his own work but rather assisted the men to do things for themselves and left the credit for any success to the men.

The Conservative

The most obvious was the staunch conservative middle class type whose main reason for working there was probably the advantage of a job of this nature offered prestige, and so forth. This type of worker is the type who could spend the largest proportion of his time rewriting the previous year's annual report in such a manner that he could ask for a raise at the annual meeting without a guilty conscience. This type of community worker however was a reasonable fellow to work with, even though his attitude toward change was not very supportive. He generally offered the use of any facilities at his command on two conditions. He could not provide any funding and if the project was a success, the credit would go to him and his agency. His rapport with the men was not good. He did not consider himself to be the type who could easily establish rapport with the men. He would rather spend his time providing the opportunity for volunteers from the middle class to work with, study and experiment on 'his' transient men.

One such worker the writer encountered missed a very good opportunity to promote the development of a viable community of single homeless men simply because of the conservative approach taken toward working with and involving the men in the operation of agency programs. In the operation of one program a number of jobs were created which could have been filled by men off the street. However the worker in charge felt he could not justify spending time and money on indigenous workers who would have to be trained and supervised. Instead he hired on workers

from outside the area on a part time basis to fill the positions. This was a very interesting and valuable experience for the outside worker, but when they left the worker who started the program was left to deal with the same old problem. This institution this worker was employed by holds rehabilitation of transients as a high priority objective.

Many of his colleagues in other agencies felt that this type of worker was a waste of resources because his wages were high and his contribution to development after all was said and done was usually next to nil. Compared to some of the other types whose activities served not only to perpetuate but to reinforce the prevailing value systems on skid row, however, he was considered relatively harmless by the skid row men in the area.

Over-Identifier

This type of worker attempted to identify so closely with the problems and the people he was working with that he often lost his own perspective. Over identification can be better understood from the point of view of the worker. Anyone raised in a middle class home who goes to work with people from the lower classes will most certainly begin to question some of the values he was raised with. The community worker who suffers from this syndrome of over identification seemed to associate the apparent disparity and the oppression of the disadvantaged which kept them poor with the protestant ethic, the capitalist system and the prejudice and discrimination of bureaucracy. In his adjustment to his new found identity the relationship between the oppressed poor and the middle class oppressor became a good cause for the worker to release his emotion in some form of negativism.

Usually the expression of negativism was directed at the system.

The system was another one of these phrases which was never clearly defined.

During this process of identification this worker was associated with people who thought like he did. His stereotype of the worker the employer, the poor and the rich were reinforced and his old values were partially replaced by new values.

As he began to stereotype other workers in the field according to his new value system he realized that by making the distinction between good and bad and categorizing people, he was falling prey to the very bureaucratic process which his new value system pointed out was wrong. At this point the worker very often became so paranoid that he could not work in or with the system.

Outside of the system he could not avoid the same mistakes that the system made. But he believed himself somehow to be sensitive enough to compensate for them.

From the perspective of other community workers such a value system made this worker very difficult to work with. He seemed to associate with just one type of person; those who thought the way he did. His group was a closed group. An outsider could only communicate with its members on a superficial basis. A down to earth discussion about the premises upon which his community involvement is based and the work he is doing would bring forth charges of intellectualizing and "head tripping". He held to the principle that any significant change in the social condition of people like the men out of work must be predicted by a very high degree of involvement with the people and the affairs of the community. No planning or evaluation was necessary. Good community workers could not be tied to bureaucratic rules. The worker seemed to operate more at the emotional than the practical level. The intimate

contact that this approach advocated between the worker and individuals in the community combined with his value system and lack of accountability to the community left him very susceptible to charges of manipulation, empire building and so forth.

The type of worker outlined here is an extreme case. Only a few workers in the Boyle Street area have been frustrated to the point of defining an "enemy". Most social agency personnel have not yet become self-licensed advocates for the problem man. Their needs have been met in other types of relationships with their clientele.

The Helper

This type of worker tended (and in some cases pretended) to be very busy going to meetings, counselling, providing transportation, locating housing, employment and so on for his clients. Rarely did he have time to sit back and reflect on what he was doing. The most interesting thing about this worker was his dedication to finding a solution to the immediate problem situation. Each move he made was made as if in response to a crisis. Unfortunately he often promoted immediate observable change to the detriment of long run development.

In his genuine efforts to change the condition of the people he was working with, this community worker very often hindered rather than assisted in helping the "down and outer" to gain independence from the system of charity which brought him to skid row. The old adage about the monkey who tried to help the fish past the rapids by picking him out of the water and carrying him around by land is also true on skid row.

Too often this type of community worker, just like the monkey, took some action before he had really examined what the problem was and had thought about some viable alternatives to the existing situation.

By continually thinking for and doing things for his clients this social worker type became victim of the trap of "over helping" people. Too often by starting projects or initiating ideas and not following up with enough support this worker only set his clients up to prove to themselves that they could fail.

This worker's lack of follow up was not necessarily due to incompetence. Very often he was unwilling to take a risk which could mean personal failure or failure for the group he was working with. In some circumstances the worker's emotional investment in his project was so high that he lost his objectivity. Very often it was necessary to rationalize the outcome to make his project look like an apparent success.

Wiseman refers to this process of rationalization as "reality shock".¹ Essentially it is a process of redefinition. It can take a number of forms. The most common form of rationalization observed during the research period was simply redefinition of the objectives or the criterion for success.

A good example of the redefinition of objectives was the medical clinic initiated originally by students at the University of Alberta to serve the needs of skid row men. Apparently the clinic has met with little success in this area. The administration is now in the process of considering a redefinition of its objectives to provide services to the entire community. This clinic was originally restricted to serving transients. If, as rumor would have it, the clinic is relocated and its

¹Jacqueline P. Wiseman, Stations of the Lost, (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 129.

objectives redefined, it will serve a different population and will have another chance for success.

Redefinition is more subtle if the objectives remain but the criteria for success are redefined. In 1967 a native group was organized to provide assistance to the native population of the Boyle Street Area. Initially the criteria for success was involvement of native people in the planning and programming of the organization. As the organization developed, the initial priority given to participation became secondary to more tangible evidence of success. Potential learning situations passed over. Interest in participation dropped off as staffing of the organization became based on experience and efficiency in the administration of tangible services. Provision of tangible services was recognized as a legitimate criteria for further funding. Over a period of just a few months the criteria for success were subtly redefined from the original criteria of native participation to criteria based on services provided. What would have been considered somewhat less than successful according to the old criteria, was considered enough of a success to at least be funded by its sponsoring agencies for another year. It is rumored that funding to establish similar agencies in other parts of the city may soon be forthcoming.

Most of the workers involved in "helping" the men out of work seemed to be drawn by some feelings of compassion or charity. This emotion may have started as a religious thing or simply a philanthropic feeling on the part of some middle class person that something must be done to "help" the poor, the weak, the lame and the disenfranchised. Whether the vehicle was a religious organization, a private or a public

institution or single individual's actions, involvement in a program to work for the betterment of others always involved a degree of emotional investment. If this emotional factor was not monitored by some system of checks and balances the direction of the development of the client population can and often was a negative rather than a positive thing, even in the eyes of the client population.

One example of this type of involvement occurred in this city with a group of transient men. A worker caught up in the helper type relationship with this group of men developed an addiction to the ego fulfilling returns he was getting on his emotional investment. The greater the perceived return, the greater the investment came to be. His emotional investment was supplemented with a financial one. This strengthened their interdependence. The fulfillment of the needs of the men became a prerequisite to fulfilling his own needs. This was a further incentive for the worker to assist and advise the men. If carried to extreme this type of assistance may consciously or unconsciously direct the planning and decision making processes of a worker's clientele. In this case, decisions made by the helper resulted in the loss of learning situations for the men and a loss of respect for the idea of the project itself. The project was not designed to be a money making operation until after it became firmly established. The support the worker was providing facilitated the project's development. For a while rapid progress was made toward the goals as interpreted to the group by the compassionate and charitable worker. A superficial examination of the project gave the impression that such a project could be expanded into an operation which should draw from public funds for support. Quite suddenly, however, the project dropped out of sight

leaving behind bad debts and bad feelings. Its rapid demise stemmed from the false sense of progress which the worker had been developing by his over involvement in the project. Press releases, representations to other agencies and the government for project funds and other activities of the group of transient men were not engineered nor supported by the men as a group. The opportunity for each member of the group to make his own emotional investment in the objectives of the project had been passed up through lost learning situations. The lack of investment showed up when a key leader left the project and there was no one who could step into his place. This particular project failed.

To the men on skid row, the helper type of worker was often perceived as a "substitute mother". The relationship between the worker and client then became a symbiotic one. It satisfied both the ego needs of the worker and the dependency needs of the transient man. It did little to develop his independence, meet his basic needs or change the system which enclosed him.

There are other examples which seem to support the argument that this tendency to push the development process in the direction of observable results or action has some bearing on the worker's need to have his own efforts recognized. This need may be so strong as to eliminate the involvement of recipients in the agencies activities at all.

Such a situation was the case with a number of single men's groups which happened to be formally or informally identified with a particular social agency. One group observed had been operating on quite a formal basis with the support of a social agency for a number of years. The group claimed to be autonomous from the sponsoring agency, although it did make use of agency space to hold meetings and so on.

The advisor to the group was a member of the agency staff. The advisor had taken such an interest in the activities of the group that any suggestions he made informally to the leaders of the group were immediately adopted with the support of a few regular attenders of group meetings. This over support was further complicated by the leaders of the group who consistently tried to anticipate the wishes of the advisor. The consequence of all this was a feeling on the part of the advisor that the group was in fact doing its own thinking and a mutually satisfying feeling on the part of the group leaders who were convinced that they were pleasing their advisor. The unfortunate aspect of this facade was that the men who were not on the inside of this group were almost completely excluded from the decision making or entry into the group.

The group was referred to as a bridge club by men not in the leadership clique. This instance was a situation in which the community worker had lost his perspective. The group had considerable potential but its development was stopped because of the over support given by the social agency personnel.

In talking to the advisor to this group the writer was impressed with his dedication to bettering the condition of the men. He may not have realized that in making decisions for the men he was drastically limiting the group's development. The group had accomplished the number one step in developing a community of men, the formation of an initial interest group which could meet together on its own. The advisor was so concerned with maintaining the existence of that group that he couldn't allow them to grow by undergoing learning situations. In fact this maintenance function had become such an over riding influence that the

group meetings almost became a ritual. Conflict and down to earth discussion were kept to a minimum. This tendency to lose one's patience in a development situation has often been referred to as the "I'll do it for you" syndrome.

The "Other" Type

A small minority of community workers of this type exhibited a characteristic which made their contribution to the solution of the skid row dilemma infinitely more effective than the contribution made by any of the other workers. This characteristic was the ability on the part of the worker to allow the persons he was working with to take the credit for any of the successful activities they were involved in. This ability to give someone else the credit helped those involved to build up their self-confidence, and establish social credibility.

These new leaders could then function in a more meaningful way both within and outside of their skid row environment. The results of this type of leadership development in the City of Edmonton are exhibited in the leaders of a number of organized groups of welfare recipients such as Humans on Welfare (HOW) and We Help Ourselves (WHO).

The character of the individual worker seemed to be the key to the success of any program on skid row.

The agencies working in the skid row area have from time to time attempted to expand their maintenance function toward a more rehabilitation oriented approach to working with the single homeless man. These attempts have generally been less than successful. The writer examined some of these different approaches during the research period. The next chapter is an analysis of some of these approaches.

Chapter VI

CURRENT APPROACHES ADVOCATED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE SINGLE HOMELESS MAN

As discussed in previous chapters the main approach taken toward the needs of men on skid row has been a straight hand out to meet his basic food, shelter and clothing needs. The workers in the field interviewed by the writer did pay lip service, at least, to the concern that meeting basic needs was not sufficient. From time to time various approaches have been taken in attempts to identify and meet some of the more complex needs. Four approaches which were current during the research period were the use of para-professional workers in social programming, the establishment of a multi-service delivery system, the concept of a classification centre and the community development process approach. These different approaches are discussed below.

The Use of Para-Professional Workers

This technique has been incorporated into the programming of social agencies from time to time over the past few years in the city. During the research period a number of indigenous and detached workers were with agencies in the skid row area attempting to make the services offered more relevant to the recipients. The distinction made by some staff in the social agencies between these two categories of "unattached" workers did little to define the difference if any, between the types. If any differences existed, it would appear that a detached worker was accountable more to the agency and the indigenous worker more to the recipients of service. As well the detached worker was apparently more

likely to be professional and more successful in whatever project he was working on so would probably warrant more compensation than the indigenous worker. Generally the detached worker interpreted activities in the community to the agency program planners. An indigenous worker, apparently was supposed to be of the constituency with which he was working. His relation to the social agency was incidental, his accountability was mainly to the community and the constituency with which he was working. Usually if the indigenous worker was successful, credit for his project went to the sponsoring agency, if not, at least he didn't mar the image of the agency.

The writer, during the summer of 1969, observed the activities of some of these agency associated community workers. Two projects in particular were of interest. Both projects were geared toward helping men out of work, either on skid row or on the margin, to adapt to the complexities of urban, industrial society.

One project was geared specifically to working with post institutional cases which had a history of institutional care of one sort or another. Both projects were sponsored by a private non-profit charity.

The worker heading each of these projects was charged with organizing and developing such supportive institutions as co-operative living arrangements, a job placement service, a classification system for unemployed transients, various types of counselling services, etc. to help their clients to adapt. Each worker was hired on a contract and given considerable flexibility to operate the project as he saw fit.

The success of these two programs is yet to be determined. However, it was very clear after only a few months of operation that one

of the projects was going to be considerably more successful than the other.

Part of the reason for this can be attributed to the competence of the supporting agencies to develop and administer detached worker projects. In the opinion of the writer one of the projects seemed to be in difficulty before it really even got started. Although the agency concerned has had some experience with detached workers, somehow the specifics of the implementation of this particular project got lost in the shuffle. Considerable pressure by certain members of the staff and a good sell job on the part of the worker resulted in the agency granting the worker a three month contract to try out some of his ideas on a trial basis. Even prior to his obtaining the contract, this detached worker was actively promoting the concept of an employment classification system and establishment of an Alcoholics Anonymous type support group focused on the everyday difficulties of the job situation. For some time he was actively recruiting support from business men via speaking engagements with local service clubs for his employment service. As with all projects of this nature, however, things don't always go well. Small problems cropped up now and again. The worker himself needed some support. He turned to the agency which sponsored him only to find that the agency staff were already so over extended that they had no time to counsel him. In an attempt to compensate for his shaken confidence the worker drew around him a couple of friends for support. This seemed to complicate the situation even more. Added to the worker's mental strain was the fact that his contract time was running out and so far he had little to show for his efforts. Being a recently reformed alcoholic, it wasn't long before the worker sought refuge in the euphoria of an alcoholic

stupor. From this point on his effectiveness as a detached worker deteriorated quite rapidly and in a period of a month or so he suffered a complete mental breakdown. He had sincerely tried, but without enough support he had driven himself into a mental institution.

Needless to say most of the blame for this unfortunate fiasco has fallen upon the head of the detached worker. A further analysis of the situation however might have revealed a number of pitfalls which any charitable institution made up of people primarily from the stable mainstream of society could fall into. At this point it might be useful to examine the role of a detached worker. The major argument put forward by advocates of detached worker programs is this. Many professional counsellors and field workers fail in their attempts to communicate and honestly empathize with their clientele. They tend to fall back to the text books and their "sterile professional training" for answers to serious community problems. This "professional" approach is detrimental to the workers rapport with the community. Too often the professional worker has to be objective about the pros and cons of a particular community action and cannot closely identify his own goals with those of his clientele.

The detached worker on the other hand, having been associated with a particular group or community for a long period of time is more aware of the problems in that community. Presumably because of his greater awareness he can identify with those problems and establish rapport with the community more readily.

When a detached worker initially goes into a community, the setting is familiar, he is conversant with the problems of the community and it would appear that he is able to make quite rapid progress in

establishing rapport and getting his project off the ground. Encouraged by this initial success the sponsoring agency all too often chalks the experiment up as a success and goes on to develop some other projects presuming that the detached worker can carry on as a professional would.

Unfortunately this insensitivity on the part of the agency to the needs of the worker, often ends up in a fiasco similar to the one illustrated above. Just as a professional has difficulty communicating with the community at times, so does the detached worker have difficulty communicating with the professional.

One of the important roles of the detached worker is to facilitate communication between the people who have a particular problem and the experts who have the experience in dealing with problems of that kind. This communication could take many different forms. Sometimes a phone call or a letter is enough. Sometimes the detached worker may go so far as to arrange a meeting between the people he is working with and a group of resource people. A meeting between say prospective employers and a group of unemployed men would be an example. Sometimes by design, because he wants to play the role of expert, or by default, because he cannot communicate with the agency staff, a detached worker takes upon himself more than he can handle and does not open the channel to the necessary resources. The agency is likely at fault here because they have not provided the worker with proper support. If detached workers are hired by an agency to better service a community, then the agency must be prepared to spend more time in planning with and providing more professional support and training than would normally be afforded to professionals.

The second project observed, although probably not the most

successful example of the use of detached workers, nevertheless did illustrate some key components to a successful project. Before the project was started the recipients themselves were very much involved in the planning. The advice of a number of other agencies and professionals was utilized. The organizers discussed the project with their potential clientele. Having received considerable support for the idea in their initial discussions, they went ahead on the advice of their clientele and recruited a detached worker from among his peers to work on the project. Professional support in terms of an advisory board and a leadership course were made available to the worker shortly after he took up the position. His close association with an advisory board allowed him to make use of many resources, professional resource personnel, communications equipment, etc. which are available to most professionals but unknown to most non-professionals. This was an added attraction for other members of the clientele to become involved in the project on a voluntary basis.

Despite the added administrative difficulties and the tenuous nature of a project staffed by detached workers, the incorporation of detached workers into this project was very worthwhile. Many professionals have expressed this opinion about involvement of detached workers in social projects. McNamara¹ proposed involvement in detached social work

¹John McNamara is the President of Humans of Welfare. He was initiated into the social field through association with the Urban Community Development Officer, Mr. Terry Garyn, who was instrumental in his being hired on by the Edmonton Social Planning Council as a detached worker with the Community Restaurant project started by C.U.R.E.S., April, 1968 - September, 1968.

as one viable route to rehabilitation. He felt that detached workers selected, trained and supervised by a staff of professionals actively involved in dealing with skid row problems would be exposed to the problems facing others like themselves. To see the problems from a new perspective could help them to understand their own difficulties that much better. Even though the project McNamara himself was connected with was a failure, it was, for him, very much a learning situation. The insight he gained is expressed in a report to his sponsoring agency,² "had it not occurred (the failure of the project), I doubt I would have had any true concept of my problems, of rehabilitation, or grasped awareness, and wonder if many professions would know as much today either."

Sometimes it takes involvement in the process of helping someone else with his social problems before one can see the social system and his relationship to it from a viable perspective. J. P. Wiseman³ in her book on the treatment of skid row alcoholics explains the differential perception on skid row in detail. She has portrayed the two major components, the skid row men and the "agents of social control" as the two opponents in a complex game of interdependent relationships. From the perspective of the curb side "row" man if it were not for his presence, the "agents of social control" the police, the Christian missionaries, psychiatrists and all the other social agency people would

²See John McNamara, "The Defectors, A Report to the President and Director of the Edmonton Social Planning Council", (Burwash, Ontario, May 15, 1969), p. 8. (Mimeographed).

³See Jacqueline P. Wiseman, Stations of the Lost: The Treatment of Skid Row Alcoholics, (New York: N.J. Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970).

have no jobs. The assistance he receives from these agencies is his right because he qualifies by virtue of his residency, his social handicap or whatever. He doesn't look upon charity from the Christian missionaries as something to be grateful for. Rather he sees himself as exploited labour which is necessary to keep the mission's salvage operation making money for the church.

The perspective of the agent of social control is very much the opposite. He sees himself not as a controlling agent who does his job and is paid a very good salary, but as a "martyr like" individual who is dedicating his life to "help" the poor, inferior, "down and outer" back into the mainstream of society where all "normal" people belong.

He sees the skid row alcoholic as an insincere, irresponsible, undersocialized, ungrateful character who is forever trying to manipulate the system in order to get something for nothing.

McNamara's proposed involvement of "defectors", the alienated recipients of social services, and so forth, with social agencies in the capacity of detached social workers could go a long way toward bridging this perception gap. The insight of the detached workers could be invaluable in the actual planning and operation of successful community projects.

Awareness of their own problems and the feeling of being needed and respected will undoubtedly affect the personal development of the workers at the same time. The success of a program such as this would restore self-respect to the recipient group as a whole and might encourage more individuals from within the ranks to become more involved.

Volunteer help is a curious phenomenon in the social field. The

writer observed each had at least one or more helpers who assisted the worker on a voluntary basis. Very often the project provided the common goal around which these men could work together informally to find the solutions to some of their own difficulties.

In addition to these two main types of para-professional workers, the indigenous worker and the detached worker there was another category of worker who did not perform quite the same function as of either of these. These workers operated on a sort of a freelance basis in a community. Generally they had no one to answer to for their activities, although in most cases they were sponsored financially by a social or a religious institution.

Working from a very flexible frame of reference these workers were in a unique position. They could spend the time required to identify with the community and its problems. Their middle class background also prepared them to relate to the "establishment". They could perform the valuable function of interpreter or go-between. In some cases this type of activity was a stage in the worker's own development. It may or may not become the worker's life style. The flexibility and lack of accountability in a situation such as this however made these workers very much more susceptible to the traps of over identification and over helping their clientele discussed in the previous chapter.

Establishment of a Classification Centre

The concept of a classification system for skid row is not new. It has long been recognized by both laymen and professionals involved in the skid row scene that the motivation, aspiration and potential for

human development varies as much between men on the skids as it does between men from any other strata of society. To avoid the temptation to stereotype all men out of work and to treat them all the same, the first major step in the habilitation or rehabilitation of transients in many large urban centres has been the establishment of a classification centre. New York was one of the first cities to recognize, that some of the homeless men can only benefit from a program which provides the basic requirements of: food, shelter and the like; that others have some capacity for development but require certain special conditions to compensate for physical or social handicaps; and that others have the capacity and interest in being helped that may make for varying degrees of improvement or eventual rehabilitation. Operation Bowery⁴ the hub of New York's rehabilitation program, is the central reception and intake centre for all homeless men seeking assistance through New York's Bureau of Social Services for Adults. The Bowery operates an outreach program to skid row hotels to make available short term assistance in terms of food, clothing, shelter, etc. Psychiatric and alcoholism consultation are provided at the Bowery as well. Referrals from this classification centre are made to the other agencies providing specialized services such as the Manhattan Detoxification Centre, and Bridge House for drug and alcohol cases and Camp La Guardia which provides long term protective care for elderly and permanently debilitated men. Co-ordination of the social services through a central classification centre has greatly increased the

⁴See Annon., "Change and Renewal, Operation Bowery - Shelter Care Treatment Centre, Annual Report", September, 1968, (New York, Operation Bowery, September, 1968). (Mimeographed).

effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. According to the Bowery's Annual Report the program is being accepted by the men as indicated by a rising volume of self referrals.

Another classification centre designed to assist the victims of skid row is the Diagnostic and Relocation Centre in Philadelphia.⁵ The Diagnostic Centre is the hub of an action-research project sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Movement, to develop a method for eliminating skid row.

The interim report published in December 1964 indicated that the successful rehabilitation and relocation of skid row men was greatly facilitated by the establishment of the classification centre.

The initial interest for a classification centre in Edmonton developed out of an effort by the United Community Fund to promote some collaboration between agencies in the provision of such services to single men in the Boyle Street area as clothing distribution, job placement and general information.

The suggestion first came in a brief presented to an open meeting of the representatives of the social agencies of the Boyle Street area in April, 1968. The brief, presented under the name of Community Upgrading and Rehabilitation Edmonton Society (C.U.R.E.S.),⁶ an organization

⁵The Diagnostic and Relocation Centre, "Philadelphia's Skid Row: A Demonstration in Human Renewal, Interim Report", (Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia, December, 1964), (Mimeographed).

See also: Scott, Fitz, Senesin and Walker, "Rehabilitating Alcoholics at Des Moines Osteopathic Center", The Osteopathic Physician, January, 1969.

⁶C.U.R.E.S., "Suggested Rehabilitation Program For Transients", (Edmonton, April 10, 1968), (Mimeographed).

of transient men founded during the winter of 1967-68, advocated "a wide scope rehabilitation program geared to the individual...(through the) re-aligning of existing programs offered by the government and private agencies." The brief advocated that the Provincial Department of Welfare (now Social Development) bear the responsibility for the initiation of the program. Their recommendations included the use of the hostel as a classification centre in addition to the present functions of the hostel as a short-term residence for transients. Included as well was a section on the formation of a community house - restaurant which was the C.U.R.E.S. rehabilitation project.

A number of subsequent meetings of representatives of the five major agencies serving transients (Marian Centre, Salvation Army, Department of Social Development, Edmonton Day Centre and Bissel Centre) and recipients were held to discuss close collaboration in the provision of other services. One outcome of these meetings was the establishment of the committee on the Single Unemployed Man in Edmonton. Represented on the committee were staff members from three of the five major agencies, Marian Centre, Edmonton Day Centre, All People's Mission, two government bodies, Canadian Manpower and Community Development, and a local clergyman representing the single men's group C.U.R.E.S. This committee proposed a brief⁷ dealing with job opportunities, employability, housing for younger men and a classification centre for homeless men. Appended to the brief was the C.U.R.E.S. proposal for rehabilitation and a document written by a local clergyman⁸ describing a proposed classification centre.

⁷Study Committee on the Single Unemployed Man in Edmonton, "A Dream of Things That Never Were", (Edmonton, October 1968), (Mimeographed).

⁸Fr. Marc Barrier, "Classification Proposal", (Undated, Mimeographed).

The brief was submitted to the Human Resources Development Authority in September, 1968. However, at last report there had been no significant action in response to the brief.

Without presuming to pass judgement as to why action taken toward establishing a classification centre has been slow, it may be of some significance to note that the two agencies most likely to undertake the operation of a classification centre were not members of the committee involved in the preparation of the brief. The Salvation Army and the Provincial Single Men's Hostel both have the physical plant and presumably a good deal of experience in working with all types of skid row men. In discussions with members of these agencies it appeared that they did share a common concern for the welfare of the men. They indicated that a classification centre and a rationalization of the available resources toward rehabilitation would be in the interests of all concerned. As an expression of their interest in the co-ordination of resources, the Salvation Army has apparently postponed a capital fund raising drive for their proposed "Harbour Light" alcoholic rehabilitation centre for at least one year. This would allow the government or some group of agencies first chance at developing a rehabilitation program.

A recent public inquiry by Justice M. B. O'Byrne into the operation of the Single Men's Hostel operated by the Department of Social Development recommended rehabilitation through "the provision of services which will foster the maximum development of each individuals potential."⁹

⁹Justice M. B. O'Byrne, "Report of the Inquiry Into the Operation of the Provincial Single Men's Hostel", (May 7, 1970) p. 3. (Mimeographed).

A first step in this development of human potential in the case of the transient man, would be the provision of a classification centre at the hostel. The primary purpose of this classification would be an assessment of the employment potential of men using the hostel. As well it would provide a mechanism to identify those in need of medical or psychiatric care and direct them to those institutions where such care can be provided. Separation of the hard core regulars from the younger men and a special program to redirect the younger men back into the mainstream of society, was another important recommendation.

Apart from the operation of the hostel itself, Justice O'Byrne recommended that a diagnostic centre be made available in an area accessible to patients, police courts, general hospitals and other essential services as part of a comprehensive program for detoxification and treatment of alcoholic patients.

The general reaction to this report has been mixed. Many agency personnel and most transient men know nothing about it. The most frequent comments heard by the writer from the agency people themselves definitely favor classification but their favourable reaction was qualified.

Probably the most appropo comments came from some of the workers from the Single Men's Hostel itself. The comments by various staff members presented the situation as outlined below.

We could very easily set-up a classification centre here in the hostel. We have the facilities and we could hire the staff to do it. The problem is what do we do with them once they are classified? The hostel is only one small part of the Department of Social Development. Within that department we get a certain slice of the budget which we have to use for the stated function which has never been changed. The function of the hostel is to provide temporary shelter and meals to single, homeless, indigent, unemployed men. It was never the intention that the hostel function as a permanent residence for anyone.

It is a hostel and not a home. Over the years we have tried to be as flexible as we could. In fact this hostel probably is the closest thing many of these men have to a home. The average length of stay is 42 days. There are 200-300 "hard core" users who use the facilities here on a semi-permanent basis.

One of the auxiliary hostels for example caters almost exclusively to the older skid row men who have become semi-permanent wards of the Department of Social Development. Many of these men are ex-war veterans and "burned out" alcoholics who don't have enough pension to make a go of it without assistance. We can easily segregate these men because they are relatively quiet and easy to handle.

What to do with the younger alcoholics and drug addicts who have not hit their "rock bottom" is a much bigger problem. We have two counsellors here who can do a certain amount of referral work and so on. Due to the large number of men we have coming through, however, the counsellors don't have time to deal with the basic issues. Their time is spent meeting emergency maintenance and health needs.

Since the establishment of the O'Byrne Commission we have not allowed anyone who has been drinking to excess into the hostel because we just are not equipped to handle them. What is needed is a detoxification centre but that would have to come under the Department of Health because it is a health problem.

We have already adopted many of the recommendations mentioned in the O'Byrne Report. The metal turnstile has been removed and renovations will be made shortly to the doors and stair wells.

The attendants we have hired on are all ex-bouncers who have had experience in dealing with men under the influence of alcohol. Very few bouncers ever get into a fight or injure anyone. We are attempting to separate the younger men from the old men with more experience. The meal hours have been changed to better suit the needs of the men looking for jobs.

We are very much in favor of the classification centre concept but we cannot progress much in that direction for lack of resources.¹⁰

Many people are asking the same question asked by this man at the hostel. "Classification for what?" A brief summary of the total resources available in the Boyle Street area would indicate that proper co-ordination of existing facilities could go a long way toward developing some follow-up to a classification centre. At least one detoxification

¹⁰Personal interview with officials at the Provincial Single Men's Hostel, June, 1970.

centre, two health clinics and a number of different agencies involved in job placement and other rehabilitation related counselling services are operating in the area. The private agencies don't appear to be capable of handling a co-ordinated program much more complicated than the present maintenance program. The lack of trust and the rivalry between agencies was illustrated by one worker who complained that he didn't like to work too closely with other workers in the same field because "they might muscle in and make use of the contacts I have developed for jobs."¹¹

The situation was illustrated by a comment made by workers at the hostel.

It is easy for private agencies to sit back and criticize because they can run away from the problem. When they turn a man away nothing is said. If that same man is turned away from the hostel it comes down on our head. You hear a lot from them and in the press about what is wrong with the hostel, but they never come to us to find out why. We are all providing services to the same group of men but we haven't had any communication from some of these agencies for the past six months.

We would like to work more closely with the private agencies, especially those who can offer services which are beyond our jurisdiction. How can we tell whether these agencies really are concerned for the men and not just out to build their own little empires? Right now it doesn't show in the work what they are doing with the men.¹²

There are some signs that this traditional rivalry between social agencies may be breaking down. Many workers have indicated that the problem is getting bigger every day. Some feel that all the agencies will have to get together to find the solution. A meeting of all the agencies in Boyle Street in the spring of 1968 was attended by nearly

¹¹Personal interview with hostel worker, summer, 1969.

¹²Personal interview at Provincial Single Men's Hostel, June, 1970.

40 people. Although no success at co-ordinating their activities has been achieved to date, one attempt has been made over the past eighteen months for two agencies serving the men to amalgamate their services.

There is one area of concern which does seem to be shared by most of the agencies, both private and public. That is the health services provided to men suffering from alcoholism. Apparently the same drugs used for the in-patient treatment of alcoholism in well equipped alcoholic rehabilitation centres are being prescribed in vast quantities by licensed medical personnel on an out-patient basis. Lack of control over the use of these drugs has been said to lead to a situation of considerable abuse.

The men have discovered that one or two pills and a glass of wine or beer will produce a much greater high than straight wine or beer ever could. Chronic alcoholics who had never had anything to do with drugs are learning which pills should be taken, in what quantities with wine or beer and the effects of each combination produces.

Many workers feel that through this irresponsible distribution of drugs the medical profession is contributing to the rising rate of drug addiction and the desperate criminal culture which follows close behind.

Various attempts have been made by agency personnel to have this situation investigated, and an awareness exists that it requires the concerted effort of all those concerned.

Recently the Minister of Social Development issued a "request for proposal"¹³ which offered the private sector the opportunity to take over the operations of the Provincial Single Men's Hostel on a contractual basis. This move on the part of government is perceived by some agency personnel as an attempt by the government to wash its hands of a basic responsibility. As one worker explained:

The idea of the hostel operation in the hands of private enterprize leaves the door open for worse exploitation of the men than we have now. The men are poorly looked after now, what will happen when the hostel has to be a money making operation?

Many workers feel that the basic issue has been missed.

The whole idea of a classification centre and rehabilitation is being pushed out the window. Whoever gets the hostel won't have enough money left over after feeding the men to even think about classification.¹⁴

The classification centre and the RFP by government are current issues. Much discussion with the agencies and the men involved is necessary before any satisfactory compromise can be reached which will serve the interests of all concerned. One thing is clear from the writer's

¹³Department of Social Development, "Request for Proposals For the Operation of the Provincial Single Men's Hostel", (Edmonton, June, 1970), (Mimeographed).

See Also: M.&M. Systems, Requests for Proposals and Social Contracts; A Strategy to Advance the Role of Private Enterprize in Canada, (Edmonton: M. and M. Systems Research Inc., 1970).

M and M Systems, Requests for Proposals and Social Contracts: A Method for Organizing Resources to Achieve Social Goals, (Edmonton: M and M Systems Research Inc., January, 1970).

¹⁴From personal interviews with social agency staff, June, 1970.

observation during the research period. Co-operation and collaboration between agencies to better serve the transient man will not be easy. As Justice O'Byrne stated in his closing remarks¹⁵ "the process of developing a rehabilitation program will be slow and at times frustrating but a start must be made."

Introduction of a Multi-Service Delivery System

A similar current approach to social development in the urban scene, which could have far reaching consequences in the Boyle Street area was outlined in the Mayor's Committee Report on "Developing Edmonton's Human Resources, May, 1968". This report was written by a committee made up of representatives from the civic and provincial governments, the university and private social agencies, in the City of Edmonton.

The committee defined four objectives as the goals of Human Resource Development. These included:

- (a) assurance of dignified and useful employment to each citizen;
- (b) assurance of adequate education and training programs to fit citizen needs;
- (c) assurance of the opportunity for meaningful citizen participation in community programs developed and operated for their betterment and
- (d) assurance of access to health, welfare and social services needed to facilitate meeting the other three main objectives.¹⁶

In line with the Mayor's Committee recommendations the civic government has taken on the responsibility for developing a plan for

¹⁵Justice M. B. O'Byrne, "Report of the Inquiry Into the Operation of the Provincial Single Men's Hostel", p. 24.

¹⁶Mayor's Committee Report on "Developing Edmonton's Human Resources, May, 1968, (City of Edmonton Social Services, May, 1968), (Mimeographed).

meeting these objectives. The original brochure published by the Committee in May 1968 advocated co-ordinated multi-level approach to human resource development through some form of quasi-government corporation responsible for the planning and delivery of comprehensive, integrated services to the community. This would de-emphasize reliance on the often tried (but with little success) method of co-ordinating existing services on a voluntary basis.¹⁷ The co-ordinating lever advocated was control of financial resources from all levels of government and private enterprise by the corporation. Functions of this multi-service corporation were to include effective co-ordination of services, evaluation of programs, examination of gaps in services, provision of leadership, particularly in poverty areas, to develop maximum involvement of residents in self-help and decision making and the provision of a wide range of family centered programs. An advisory committee and a planning committee were established to follow up the Mayor's Committee Proposal. In January of this year a request for proposal was developed and it was advertised for a research team to define an area in the city which could be used as a pilot project and to further develop the multi-service delivery system into a viable project at the community level. A Toronto based consultant firm received the contract and began work on the summer of 1970. Although it seems that Boyle Street will not be chosen as the pilot project area, if the

¹⁷Prior the 1970 Annual Meeting, the official function of the Edmonton Social Planning Council was to assist in planning and to co-ordinate the activities of the social agencies receiving funds from the United Community Fund. This co-ordinating function was based on voluntary participation by the agencies involved.

project is successful in establishing a multi-service delivery system in some other part of the city it probably won't be too long before a similar system of service delivery will be established in the Boyle Street area.

The difficulties to be overcome in establishing this multi-service delivery system will not be unique to the Boyle Street area. Apathy on the part of the citizenry and resistance from the social agencies will likely be experienced all over the city. The proliferation of existing agencies and the interdependent relationship these agencies have with their clientele may however, pose problems of a much greater magnitude in Boyle Street.

The major problem will be one of communication. Communication is understood here to be the interaction between the clients who have needs and the social agencies who have resources. The problem is evident when we observe the results of the present matching up of needs to resources. Many examples can be given of instances when through ignorance and insensitivity on the part of either the requesting client or the responding social agency the mismatching of needs and resources has led to lack of trust, frustration and bad feelings on both sides. A very good example of this communication problem was illustrated in a previous example dealing with the Provincial Single Men's Hostel. The original function of the hostel has never been changed. The needs of the men using its facilities have. Temporary assistance in the form of room and board and possibly a small loan for clothing and equipment are not sufficient to meet the needs of a man who can no longer go to work on a job in the bush and cannot find a suitable job in the city. All

these facilities plus the extra food, clothing and shelter he is offered by other institutions in the area could do little to solve the problem facing Bob, father of five, separated, age 42, on the margin of skid row who could get along fine on his own if he could get an inside job in the city.¹⁸ The key to successful communication may be found in the objectives laid out in the request for proposal for the Human Resources Development Study.¹⁹ "It (the Multi-Service Delivery System Pilot Project) should aim at significant citizen involvement, especially those who may be consumers of the services." The report from the consultant group awarded the contract for the study, will not be made public until the fall of 1970. Judging from the attempts this group has made to community involvement in the planning and implementation of any socially oriented projects can very often be the key to a successful project. The two approaches just discussed assume a relatively high degree of clientele involvement. Probably a pre-condition to implementing either of these approaches would be the initiation of the community development process.

Initiation of the Community Development Process

Community development has been variously defined in the literature. According to Biddle and Biddle²⁰ community development is

¹⁸Edmonton Journal, June 20, 1970.

¹⁹"The City of Edmonton Human Resources Study, Request for Proposal", City of Edmonton Social Service Department, December 29, 1969, Edmonton Journal, May 21, 1970.

²⁰Biddle, W. W. and L. J. Biddle, The Community Development Process, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1965), p. 78.

a process by which human beings can live with and gain control over local aspects of a frustrating and changing world. The process can be initiated by the intervention of a community development practitioner to perform a motivating role in the community. A most important function of this practitioner is to assist the community in defining its problems and identifying and mobilizing its resources to attain objectives which the community sets for itself.

As a motivation-educational process community development is a vital tool in preparing citizens to become more effective in their public relationships.²¹ The action process strengthens the horizontal relationships within the community stimulating inter-action between community units facilitating self-help and local initiative. Another community development worker²² operationalizes the concept of community development as the harmonious combination of the resources of human beings as individuals and groups with the resources, both technical and human, of society as a whole. He presupposes that eventually the client will have something to say about the kind, quality and intensity of this integration of resources. Once this process is started the community should be able to take action. A basic tool in this action process is democratic participation. Democratic participation is an essential tool in sharing control over resources which influence decisions affecting the community.

Community development was first introduced into the city by the Community Development Branch of the Provincial Government in

²¹J. R. Whitford, "Toward a More Restricted Definition of Community Development", (Preliminary draft paper, 1969), p. 8.

²²J. R. Albert, "Proposal Presented to Human Resources Development Authority on Community Development", (Edmonton: H.R.D.A., 1970) p. 5.

February, 1967. An additional Community Development Officer (C.D.O.) was taken on staff in 1969. From time to time these workers have arranged for the hiring of detached or indigenous workers to assist them.

The community developer's task as defined by one Urban C.D.O.²³ was "to motivate and encourage people to take action toward their participation in the solution to the problems which confront them." (Garvin). The Urban C.D.O.'s have been primarily issue-oriented in their operation. Wherever possible an attempt has been made to bring interested members of the community into contact with community officials, cabinet ministers and other persons in influential positions in the power structure. This has greatly facilitated communication between the policy makers and the various constituencies in the urban community. Some of the urban groups which the C.D.O. helped to organize, developed to the point where they no longer required the services of the C.D.O. One group in particular, Humans On Welfare, is functioning entirely independent of the C.D.O.

An attempt to initiate the community development process on skid row during the winter of 1968 failed. Part of the reason for this failure was the inability of the C.D.O. to donate the time necessary to help the men organize themselves into a viable group. In his final report, Garvin²⁴ indicated quite strongly that there is potential for the development of a viable community on skid row. "Given encouragement and some help there are a number of men (on skid row) who could respond in a very positive way towards dealing with the plight of the transient man."

²³Personal interview with T. J. Garvin.

²⁴T. J. Garvin, Urban C.D.O., "Annual Report 1970", (Edmonton: Government of Alberta, H.R.D.A.), p. 8. (Mimeographed).

Although the C.D.O. is often a public servant hired by the government and therefore responsible to all the people represented by that government his conditions of service are such that he is usually identified more with a particular constituency than with government in the broad sense. This dual commitment often places the C.D.O. in the awkward position. In some instances he finds he has to support the community in which he is working in opposition to government on particular policies. In other instances he is under pressure by the community to act on their behalf in influencing government or department policy.

A community worker is always susceptible to the dangers of establishing a dependent relationship with the members of the community in which he is working. In such a situation his independence can be asserted through his association with the government. One Urban C.D.O.²⁵ commenting on this situation had this to say:

A C.D.O. is constantly having to put himself in a position where the people he is working with can knock him down a notch. Sometimes there is a real problem getting the community to accept the responsibility of making their own decisions. One way to ensure this is to throw out enough alternatives that they don't know which ones you would choose. Then they have to make their own decision about what they want to do. One thing a worker has to avoid is manipulation toward the proper decisions as he perceives them. One way to get around this is to maintain as independent a relationship with the community as possible. Activities which create obligations are difficult to cope with if the ultimate goal of a C.D.O. is to work himself out of a job.

The initiation of the community development process is possible in the Boyle Street area. If a project was undertaken the process must be initiated on two levels. The ultimate goal could conceivably be the development on the one hand of a delivery system which is intelligent, sensitive and flexible enough to respond to the real needs of the clientele

²⁵Personal interview with T. J. Garvin.

and on the other hand of an articulate and responsible clientele which is able to state its case clearly and is willing to and able to make efficient and effective use of the resources offered. Development of this request-response system must be an on-going process as client population and the components of the delivery system change.

Initiation of the process at the agency level would likely have a team-building effect, initially within the agency and eventually with the "community" of agencies providing services to the transient men. Before it can effectively respond to its clientele an agency must be fully aware of its own strengths and weaknesses. It must be able to evaluate its role in relation to the other parts of the social system, the clients, the other agencies and so on, and it must have the ability and the flexibility to adapt to a changing social environment. The first step in evaluation of role and function of an agency must take place at the individual social worker level. This self-evaluation will be a difficult step. The agency personnel are now in the driver's seat. Change could affect their authority and control over the distribution of resources. Many agency personnel are aware of their personal inadequacies and would like to correct them. Some are unaware that their present approach to helping the client actually does him more harm than good. Most fear any change because it could leave them vulnerable to pressures from the community and the funding sources which could force them out of the social field altogether. The safest place then to start this self-evaluation is within the agency itself. Team building within the agency level will provide the internal support and stability necessary for the agency to cope with the confusion and the pressures which accompany change. The resource staff necessary for this self-evaluation could be primarily

persons experienced in this field of human relations.

Having examined these commitments and roles as individuals the next step for staff at the agency level is to examine their perception of the objectives, role and function of their agency. What does it stand for? What is the short run effect of its assistance? The long run effect, etc? Direct feed back from the clientele in this phase is necessary to capitalize on the evaluation process. Often the image of the agencies as perceived by the clientele differs from the agencies own perception.

Face to face communication with recipients as individuals or in organized groups and the exchange of perceptions could greatly facilitate to the re-evaluation of objectives, roles, resources and requests on the part of both the agency and the clientele.

While the staff of the social agencies are going through the team building process and developing some sensitivity to the needs of their clientele the community development process must be initiated at the street level with the men out of work.

Last summer the writer became involved in an attempt to initiate the community development process with a small group of transient men. The insight gained from this experience convinced the writer that the initiation of the community development process at the street level is possible albeit time consuming and expensive.

An Attempt to Initiate the Community Development Process

The writer's first introduction to Al and Joe was over a plate of potato stew at the Marian Centre early in July. As with many other men encountered at the first meeting their first names were learned and that was about all. Both men were younger than the average transient.

Al was probably 32 and Joe was three or four years younger. These two men gave one the indication that in fact all is not lost on skid row. Some of the men at least don't have the stereotype fatalist, hopeless attitude. These two guys were full of ideas and enthusiasm. They had been involved in helping to change the skid row situation, in a sort of way for a number of years.

Since leaving part way through his university career with a severe alcohol problem Al had spent some time in jail and had taken two, full three month treatments at an alcoholic's rehabilitation centre in the northern United States. He had been employed for some time as a detached counsellor for Provincial Alcoholic Referral Centre in one of the major centres in western Canada. He left that job out of sheer frustration with the way in which the referral centres dealt with the skid row men. According to Al one point where society really shows its ignorance and makes a major mistake is in the treatment of alcoholism. One of his pet peeves, taken from his personal experience, was the manner in which the skid row alcoholic is discriminated against in the alcoholic treatment centres. "How can society claim equal opportunity for all when it is nearly impossible for anyone but a middle class alcoholic to get into a treatment centre?" Al was a tee totaler. For him the rehabilitation had been successful. He was sober and articulate and exhibited some leadership qualities.

Joe's personality complimented Al's very well. He was quiet and methodical. Somewhere in his background he had had some training in office work. He kept very good minutes and could type and write letters well. Joe didn't drink although he did on occasion use soft drugs.

Al and Joe had been travelling together for nearly two years. They had been active in organizing transient men's groups in co-operation with a religious institution in Saskatchewan and had participated in the 1969 Poverty Conference in Saskatoon as representatives of an organization of "skid row" men. The writer's first impressions of these men were very favourable indeed.

After spending some time getting to know Al and Joe, the writer explained his situation as a student and researcher and offered his resources to assist them in the organization of a group of transient men in Edmonton's Boyle Street area. They were mildly enthused and did accept the offer. They had apparently already made some progress in that direction through an existing organization.

In their opinion however, the existing organization was not really very active and due to its symbiotic relationship with a local religious institution change probably could be effected more rapidly by creating a totally new organization. Their proposal for this new organization was quite ambiguous. Since the writer knew a few other men in the area who were interested in forming some sort of organized voice, it was proposed that we find some meeting place and all get together. One could then see if all had interests in common with regard to the plight of the transient man.

It was at this point that some of the realities of the transient situation were brought home forcefully. Al pointed out in a very loud and clear way the underlying dichotomy of any attempt to establish an organization of men. Al and Joe were both at the time getting their food from the Provincial Hostel. Much as they could appreciate and discuss the need for organization and change, they felt that a first

priority was at least semi-independence from the institution which might be involved in the process of change. The problem at hand then was not where to start an organization, but how to get Al and Joe financially independent so that they could spend their full time establishing some sort of rudimentary organizations.

The obvious solution appeared to be to get a job. The writer's contacts with the private employment agencies could almost guarantee the guys a job. This proposition was discussed and finally it was decided that getting a job wasn't the answer. With no skills and no reputation, any job they got would have taken so much out of them during the day that they wouldn't have been able to work organizing men at night. There was not enough time to work for a few months and save enough to spend the next few months organizing men full time. The answer obviously was to contact some social agency and have them provide enough support for Al and Joe to live on. At this point the writer's contacts would be useful.

Taking the philosophical point of view that the C.D.O. should assist his constituency to do their own thing, the writer began to take these two fellows around to the social agencies with their story and their proposal. Most social agencies were not impressed and response to the proposal about forming an organization of transients was not encouraging. Of particular interest was the response of an agency which had very good contacts with potential sources of government support for organizations such as the one proposed. It was pointed out that Al and Joe were a constituency of two from a population of around 1000. There was no indication how representative the proposal and the concerns expressed by these men were of the total population of transient men.

We were told to go out and organize twenty or thirty men and come back with a representative group. Al's reaction to this interview was interesting. He did not in fact see it as a challenge at all. Rather he felt slighted because the agency person didn't see the prior need; that of providing initial support to Al and Joe so that they could spend their time organizing a group of twenty or thirty men.

Another agency approached was not quite so direct in responding to the request for help. After the introduction of Al and Joe to one of the social workers, they were left to make the request and outline their proposal. Apparently shortly after Al and Joe began their presentation, the social worker sent them out on an errand with one of his friends. When they got back to the office, no one was there. For the next week this worker openly avoided any attempt on Al's part to present his case. The dynamics of the situation were hard to believe. Finally one evening Al and Joe cornered the worker in a public meeting and their perseverance paid off. Through him they were able to arrange public assistance to support them for two months on a trial basis.

It was decided at this meeting that a public meeting was necessary to inform more transient men about the aims and objectives of the organization. The committee struck to handle the details included Al, Joe and one other man. This first meeting was a revelation of the potential for involvement and participation among skid row clientele.

In the few days following this first meeting a number of smaller meetings were held, the idea seemed to catch on like a prairie fire. All the while the writer was trying to maintain as much of an observer role as possible. Just the day before another big meeting a very interesting thing happened to the identified leaders Al and Joe. They had been very active talking up this organization and at the same time

trying to get support for themselves from some social agency. They invited the writer to go with them to Safeway when they exchanged their welfare food vouchers. Walking back to their apartment with the food, it was evident that their attitudes had changed entirely. The day before they had been saying things like "If we get an apartment, we'll have a place to hold meetings" but, now that they had a place they were making derogatory comments about the guys in the group and saying things like "We'll have to get that lock fixed so we can keep the bums out."

Meanwhile in anticipation of Al and Joe finding some support, the idea of an organization of men who wanted to get off the skids had been promoted by a number of people.

The first meeting of the group was attended by nine interested men. They called themselves the "Weak But Willing." The aims of the organization were to create an environment away from skid row which would be conducive to the rehabilitation of skid row inhabitants, and to set-up the necessary rehabilitation programs to assist transient men back into the mainstream of society. A number of ideas regarding how this could be done were brought up at this meeting and developed in detail at subsequent gatherings. Most of the ideas were based around the concepts of rehabilitation and penal reform. These included a classification centre on skid row linked up with an agricultural farm and industrial park in a location away from the city such as an old coal branch town; sheltered training and workshop situations; drug and alcohol rehabilitation and a complex of halfway houses in urban areas to assist in re-entry.

The significant point about the ideas and methods of implementation that these men were discussing was brought home by one of the men who was quite indignant about the fact "that no one asks skid row guys how they can

get off the skids, they just tell them how."

Earlier the men had been told that the writer couldn't attend the meetings that weekend, partly because of an out-of-city engagement and partly because of not wanting to become identified as one of the leaders. Upon returning to the city on Monday the writer contacted Al and Joe. They hadn't attended the meetings either. Although they did make many excuses about why they couldn't go it was obvious that they were doing quite well without the other guys and in fact were fixed for the next two months.

The other members of the group were contacted and the writer tried to keep things going but without the leadership Al was able to provide the group gradually fell apart. All told the organization had been in existence for about three weeks. Six large meetings with the attendance of from 10-20 men. Many smaller meetings were held and a good deal of interest and enthusiasm was shown.

This attempt at establishing an organization of skid row men did not prove successful. The reasons for this failure are fairly obvious. Lack of time and experience in working with people in the writer's part were major contributing factors. The experience did however bring up a number of points which are worthwhile developing at this time.

The spontaneous concern which the men expressed toward solving some of their own problems was sparked by a minimal effort on the part of two non-professional agents of change. In the few meetings which these men had together they identified many obstacles which kept them from leading the life style they wanted away from the skid row environment.

The number of alternate solutions they offered as ways of meeting these obstacles indicated that they were concerned with finding some way to

get out of their present situations. The answers to the problems faced by these men are already understood by them. The ultimate problem seemed to be in the implementation of these solutions.

The almost immediate identification of a leader was significant. It represents a barrier in community organization which must be broken down. Many recipients of community services have been receiving assistance in decision making for so long that they no longer feel that it is their responsibility. This feeling of impotence has resulted in the "let the government do it attitude". In the example this same obligation of responsibility to the identified leader, Al was part of the reason for failure. On the other hand, the creativity expressed in their designs for rehabilitation schemes and their insight into the solution to their own problems were an indication that once these men realized that they could once again make decisions for themselves the road to developing their own human potentials would be considerably shortened.

Of all the approaches and community worker styles observed by the writer during the summer of 1969 the only one which seemed to fit the need expressed by this unorganized group of men was the community development approach.

Through the community development process groups such as this one can become organized and involved in the solution to their own problems. As they begin to articulate their needs the social service agencies will become a bit more open and receptive.

Over time the communication channels between the social agencies with the resources and the single homeless men with expressed need will open up. Honest working relationships and the bonds of confidence and trust are the first step toward developing some viable alternatives to the existing life style on skid row.

Chapter VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Historical Perspective

Homelessness is a condition of man which has been with us since the beginnings of history. It has only been in recent history that homelessness has been defined as unhealthy for our society. Prior to the Industrial Revolution in Europe mobility was a key to survival during periods of social and economic disorganization. With the coming of the factory system and the harnessing of stationary sources of energy the need increased for a stable working force to support the economic system. To ensure a stable and dependable work force European society developed a set of norms called the 'Protestant Ethic' which was compatible with the demands of the expanding industrial economy of the era.

The American Revolution in 1865 marked the beginning of the development of that particular brand of homelessness which is called skid row. The period of history just prior to the turn of the century established the pattern on which skid row sections were to develop all across the North American Continent. Development of the natural resources of America was contingent on the availability of a large versatile mobile labour force.

The influx of British and European immigrants made up the major portion of this labour force. To accommodate these mobile workers inland, ports of call, with facilities similar to those around the labourer in seaport towns, sprang up in cities at the crossroads of the overland transportation routes. Fluctuations in the economy were responsible for

the development of the skid row sections at these ports of call. Periods of unemployment caused the members of the labour force to move to the cities where they could survive on assistance from private and public institutions while they waited for the economy to pick up and the job market to expand.

The expansion in the economy after the turn of the century created jobs which attracted such large numbers into this mobile labour force that they became a substantial political force in America. Seasonal unemployment which caused large numbers of men from this labour force to move into the urban centres led to a rapid expansion in skid row sections in many cities. This was the Golden Age of Skid Row.

World War I brought about changes in American society which were reminiscent of the changes caused by the Industrial Revolution in Europe. The mobile labour force was replaced in large part by machines. A revival of the 'Protestant Ethic' came about with its emphasis on stability and production. Homelessness and skid row became defined as an unhealthy segment of society.

The stock market crash and the depression of the 1930's brought about considerable social disorganization. The homelessness which resulted was met by massive doses of government assistance. Homelessness during this period had a different connotation than the homelessness which was responsible for the establishment of skid row.

Skid row had developed to service the labour force which had been attracted away from their homes due to economic expansion and an increase in the jobs available. These people had been forced to move due to an economic depression. The depression affected not only single men but whole families. The norms of stability and hard work were very much reinforced during this period as well.

After the economy began to expand, through World War II and after the war many of the homeless were absorbed back into the economy. The residue of handicapped, the aged and the minority who just don't want to work made up the population of our existing skid row sections.

There are one or two points from the Canadian experience which differs from this general pattern of the development of skid row area. The first of expansion during the late 1800's and up until the first World War did not have a marked skid row section in many Canadian cities. The experience during the depression was similar to the general pattern.

Skid row development following the Second World War, especially in the City of Edmonton and other Canadian cities which service the natural resource development in Northern Canada, took a different direction to the general pattern. While skid row sections in other cities continued to decline after the war the skid row section in Edmonton began to expand. The skid row section in Edmonton is a "living" skid row. It expands and contracts with the availability of employment in the oil industry, construction, mining, logging and exploration for natural resources along the northern frontier.

The urban renewal concept which was born in the early 1960's in Canada has brought Edmonton's skid row development out into the open. Now is the opportunity to profit from mistakes made in other cities in their attempts to upgrade and relocate their skid row sections.

Methodology

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the existing programs and the existing facilities presently being adopted to alleviate some of the difficulties faced by the single unemployed man living on Edmonton's skid row. The methodology used in the study was based on

participant observation.

The writer spent about half of his research time in participant observation of the men who live in the skid row section of the City of Edmonton. The other half was spent interviewing officials of various agencies and institutions with active programs catering to the needs of these men. In addition to his observations other data sources utilized by the writer included in-depth interviews with key informants, review of social agency files and public relations material and statistical studies carried out by other researchers.

In the writer's opinion this type of study should be carried out by a research team rather than an individual researcher. This particular study was not inclusive enough to come up with any statistically verifiable material. Nevertheless it is hoped that some of the insights gathered will provide direction for further research in the field.

The Present

The difficulties faced by the inhabitants of Edmonton's skid row are very complex. What is needed is more than simply employment. From the point of the transient man, the major problem is one of survival. Single, homeless men are too often looked upon by the majority of society, as despicable, worthless bums who are not willing to work and contribute to the betterment of society. Industry looks upon them as a mobile labour force which can be utilized to fill the jobs in Canada's developing north which cannot yet be economically done by machine. In the off season or after a man is too old or handicapped to work industry has no further use for them.

The men look upon themselves as being trapped in a cycle of exploitation from which there is no escape. Their time is taken up in

trying to adapt to a changing social system which has stigmatized them as lazy and no good and an economic system which they don't have tools to compete in.

In his adjustment to the system the skid row man has found that one of the few ways he can survive is to ply on the emotions of those in the sympathetic larger society who work in and support the network of public and private charitable institutions which are found in the skid row area. He has discovered that the worse off he is financially, the dirtier and the more acute his alcoholic problem is the more likely he is to get a share of the fruits of the industrial society in the form of a charitable handout.

The work of the charitable agencies and institutions on Edmonton's skid row seems to be predicated on the assumption that there is no escape from the skid row trap. The existing treatment system is primarily maintenance oriented. The criterion for distribution of assistance is the degree to which the men exhibit the symptoms of destitution. These criteria are encouragement for a man to go to the extreme in his attempt to get his share. This extreme can often result in disease, disability and an early death.

A few feeble attempts have been made to rationalize the assistance programs on skid row. The major current issue in this regard is the proposal for a classification system. Other approaches which have been tried include the use of para-professional workers, establishment of a multi-service delivery system under the central administration of a quasi government corporation and of the men in the solution involvement of some of their difficulties through the community development process.

The success of these programs has been limited. The potential for success is considerable but to date it would appear that too little

time and resources have been devoted to these different approaches to prove their merit.

Concluding Statement

This study was only an exploratory study. It was not the intent of the writer to propose at any solutions to the problems posed by the existence of skid row. Two points did become very clear during the research project however which should be noted by future researchers in this field. The single homeless man living in the skid row environment is generally not satisfied with his present life style. However, any life style which society may want him to adopt must be attractive enough to him that changes his present life style be made voluntarily. Any further research or social program which may provide opportunity for alternate lifestyles must necessarily consider the involvement of the single homeless man as a key factor.

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Appendix A

SERVICES PROVIDED IN THE CITY OF EDMONTON

FOR SINGLE, HOMELESS MEN, SUMMER 1969

Temporary Food, Shelter and ClothingSingle Men's Hostel: 10014 - 105A Avenue, 424-2596

Shelter: A bed is provided either in the hostel itself or a voucher is given out for a bed in a nearby rooming house or the Salvation Army.

Meals: 2 meals a day are provided:

Breakfast - 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

Supper - 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Bag lunch and vouchers for meals at off hours at the Salvation Army are given out at the discretion of the staff. Special arrangements for individuals requiring special diets can be made by appointment.

Bus tickets: Provided for transport to work out of town on proof of employment from Canada Manpower or employer. E.T.S. bus tickets are provided for transport to and from work, hospital at discretion of the staff.

Clothing: Voucher for clothing loan of up to \$50.00 is given on proof of employment.

Health Care: Sick parade every morning, hospitalization and treatment at discretion of the social workers on staff.

Recreation: T.V. Lounge.

Gunn Welfare Centre: Gunn, Alberta, 932-5287

- Custodial care for the single unemployable man who does not qualify under any Social Allowance or Pension program

- Referrals through Mr. E. T. McCullough, 429-5411

Salvation Army: 9611 - 102 Avenue, 429-4271

- Shelter: Single room \$9.00 per week, dormitory \$1.00.
- Vouchers from Department of Social Development are for dormitory beds only.
- Meals: A full course meal costs about 85 cents in the cafeteria.
- Bus tickets: Available in limited quantity.
- Haircuts: A limited number of vouchers are available for a haircut at the Barber School in the mornings only.
- Recreation: T.V. room, chapel services and Bible study Tuesday and Friday nights 7:00 p.m.; Sunday 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and sandwiches after the service.
- Services for Rehabilitation Unit and staff every morning.
- Labour Bureau: Arranged through the desk clerk.
- Rehabilitation: Traditional approach to Rehabilitation (Spiritual Orientation) - at present they have no professionally trained counsellors.
- Rehabilitation Unit has a capacity of 8 - 10 men, clients are provided with room and board and some tobacco money.
- Clients work in the Industrial Centre repairing donated articles, drive S.A. pickup trucks or work in S.A. stores.
- They are expected to abide by the rules (no alcohol, off the street by 11:00 p.m.) and attend the religious services while staying at the rehabilitation unit. Average length of stay is three months.
- The Salvation Army expects to open up a Harbour Light Rehabilitation Unit within a year or so. Contact Major Hagglund.

Probation, Parole Supervision, Chaplaincy: 9656 - Jasper Avenue, contact Major Hagglund.

Suicide Bureau: phone 424-4527.

YMCA: 10030 - 102A Avenue, 424-8047

In special cases young and inexperienced transient men may be put up in the YMCA by Department of Social Development Mens Division.

Shelter: Rooms - \$4.50, \$5.00, \$6.00.

Meals: Cafeteria - full course meal for about \$1.40.

Recreation: Residence in the YMCA entitles one to use of facilities.

Edmonton Day Centre: 10628 - 96 Street, 424-4368

Shelter: Daytime only:

Monday to Friday - 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday to Sunday - 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Overnight emergency shelter open at 11:00 p.m. - must be out by 8:00 a.m. Will accommodate men under the influence of alcohol.

Recreation: T.V., cards, magazines, films, phone, casual labour arranged through floor supervisor.

Rehabilitation: Assistance available on request only from secretary upstairs through volunteer counsellors.

All Peoples' Mission: 9560 - 103A Avenue, 424-2471

Shelter: Daytime senior citizens recreation program - Senior Citizens Camp.

Meals: Special occasion meals only, emergency food assistance may be obtained through a caseworker.

Coffee and sandwiches served after Wednesday night entertainment in winter months.

Rehabilitation: Social caseworkers - Doug Burgess, Rev. Spady, provide individual counselling and assistance by way of job placements, driving people to hospitals, providing small amounts of money for incidentals such as bus tickets, shaving needs, etc., assistance in housing accommodation.

Recreation: During winter months only January - May, Wednesday nights at 7:30. Entertainment followed by coffee and sandwiches.

Sunday - Centre is open from 9:30-12:00 for cards, T.V., etc.

Marian Centre: 10528 - 98 Street, 424-3544

- Shelter: Daytime only - 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday; closed on Sunday.
- Meals: Served Monday to Saturday 12:00 to 2:30 p.m.
- Clothing: (bus tickets, etc.) in limited supply - see Jim Guinan.
- Labour Bureau: The City Centre Co-op an organization started by the men themselves, has as its major project an employment bureau for casual labour.
- The Co-op meets every Thursday night at 8:00 p.m.
- Recreation: T.V., cards, books and magazines, AA meetings - Monday - Friday at 12:15 noon and Tuesday evening at 8:00 p.m.
- Films are shown Monday nights.

Hope Mission: 10360 - 97 Street, 422-2018

- Shelter: Nil (will be moving to a new location - 99th Street and 106 Avenue in July 1970).
- Meals: Tea and sandwiches served after evening service.
- Clothing: Limited distribution of clothing, contact Mr. Williams.
- Recreation: Religious services Monday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

Academy Assumption: 10765 - 98 Street

- Service: Sandwiches between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Sunday.

SHIP Medical Clinic: 10628 - 96 Street, 424-3337

- Service: General out patient care.
- Hours: Monday - Friday: Nurse on duty 1:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Doctors and Medical Students on duty 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Dr. David Craig (Crisis Clinic): 10620 - 97 Street, 422-5656

Service: General out patient care; counselling and out patient treatment for addiction to drugs and alcohol.

Hours: Monday - Saturday: Nurse on duty - 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
 Doctor - 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon
 Sunday : Doctor -10:00 a.m. - 12 noon

Student Legal Services: 10336 - 96 Street, 429-1197

Service: Law students from the University of Alberta provide legal advice to men who either do not qualify or do not know about the Provincial Legal Aid Scheme at the District Court House. If possible the cases which do qualify are referred on to Legal Aid.

Project Recovery:

Contact Bob Townsend, Howard Hunt

Object of the project is to provide counselling, some treatment and a place to stay during the dry out period before entering Henwood or some other rehabilitation centre and the period after leaving such an institution required to re-adjust to every day life. No fees are required, however, a certain amount of screening of potential clients is carried out by the staff to ensure that those who are receiving the services are genuinely interested in their own rehabilitation.

Capacity for 10-15 men.

Henwood: 1 1/2 miles north of Oliver, 799-3341

Box 100, Edmonton

An in-patient hospital under the Department of Public Health for intensive treatment of alcoholism.

Referrals made through the out patient department of the Division of Alcoholism.

Voluntary.

Capacity for 50 men.

Will not take alcoholics until after a drying out period.

Contact Mr. Charles, Division of Alcoholism.

Belmont Rehabilitation Centre: Attorney General's Department, Box 1298,
Edmonton, PBX 476-1337

Contact Mr. Banner.

Provides minimum security and rehabilitation services to prisoners with an alcoholism problem - may be transferred from Provincial Gaols on the recommendation of a selection committee.

Capacity 125.

Belmont Halfway House: 10024 - 106 Street, 424-7028

Referrals only through Division of Alcoholism, contact man - Mr. Charles.

Service is to provide follow up with the object of maintaining sobriety of employable discharges from Belmont Rehabilitation Centre and Oliver.

Job placement service.

Capacity 16.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 10237 - 98 Street, 422-2764

Contact Mrs. V. Woods.

Personal contact and group therapy as a means to help alcoholics recover from alcoholism.

Regular meetings throughout the week - times and places of these meetings are available from Mrs. Woods.

Treatment for Drug Addiction

Division of Alcoholism - 424-1141.

Contact Mr. Weidman

Future Society: Edmonton Social Planning Council, 424-0331

Aims and programs similar to the original John Howard Society. Assists ex-inmates to adjust and find employment and treatment for alcoholism problems.

Contact Mr. Terry Hansen.

Social Recreation

- Club 88: For unattached persons between the ages of 25 and 40, contact Mrs. Bishop - 422-5333.
- 30-30 Club: For unattached persons over 30, contact 429-1929 or see advertisement in "Personal Column" - Edmonton Journal.
- 40-60 Club: For unattached persons between 40 and 60, dances, etc., contact Mrs. Powell, 466-0461.
- Minus One Club: Single persons over 21, dances, etc., contact 469-6187.
- Single Parents Club : Contact YMCA - 424-8047.
- The Solos: Contact Mrs. McMillan - 477-8806.
- Friday Happenings: Age 21 - 35, dances, etc., contact Box 281, Edmonton.

Employment Opportunity

Canada Manpower Centre: Centennial Building, 10015 - 103 Avenue

Casual Labour Office: 10213 - 97 Street, 429-5147

Referral service for job placement, local and out of city.

Has facilities for upgrading and retraining through Alberta Vocation Centre - waiting list for re-training and upgrading.

Manpower mobility program - for migrant workers.

Wages are negotiated between employee and employer subject to Minimum Wage Laws.

Central Personnel Services: 10287 - 101 Street, 429-5951

Casual employment, payrolling and permanent placement.

Hourly wage rates - \$1.40 starting; daily advance \$3.00 per day.

Industrial Overload: 10349 - 97 Street, 429-3751

Casual employment; hourly wage rates \$1.40 starting; daily advance - \$4.00 per day.

Manpower Service (Edmonton) Ltd.: 10128 - 103 Street, 424-4166

Casual employment, permanent placement; hourly wage rates \$1.50 starting; daily advance - \$2.00.

City Centre Co-op Club: Marian Centre, 10528 - 98 Street, 424-1695

Casual employment; refers members of the club to casual jobs in and outside the city; minimum wage of \$1.50.

Appendix B

CALENDAR OF EVENTS OF SOCIAL AGENCY ACTIVITIES

IN EDMONTON'S SKID ROW DISTRICT

1965: The City Centre Co-op Club, an organization of unattached men was formed at the Marian Centre. The Club offers employment opportunities, a loan fund and social activities to its members.

Reference: City Centre Co-op Club, mimeographed information sheet.

1966: Summer, City of Edmonton Planning Department conducted a study of the Boyle Street urban renewal area.

Dr. George Kupfer, Edmonton Study Community Opportunity Assessment, Edmonton; Human Resources Research and Development, Government of Alberta, 1967.

Edmonton City Planning Department, "Urban Renewal Concept Reports, City of Edmonton", October, 1967.

Bell, L. I., "Boyle Street Area, A Consultative Report Prepared for the Planning Department of the City of Edmonton", Vancouver, November, 1966.

1967: February, A Community Development Officer was stationed in the City of Edmonton under a joint provincial-municipal funding arrangement.

T. J. Garvin - "Annual Report", February 22, 1968; "Urban Community Development", July, 1968; "Annual Report", June 16, 1969; "Human Resources Development", 1970.

All reports were to the Community Development Branch, Human Resources Development Authority, Edmonton.

1967: June, A seminar on Urban Renewal recommended further study into the social rehabilitation of skid row in the Boyle Street area.

Rose, Dr. Albert, "Report of Presentation to the Social Seminar on Urban Renewal", Edmonton, June 28, 1967.

- 1967: December, United Community Fund requested the Edmonton Social Planning Council to study the pattern of services in the Boyle Street area to identify possible duplication or gaps in service.
- 1968: Spring, The Community Upgrading and Rehabilitation Edmonton Society (C.U.R.E.S.) was in the process of organization. A detached worker financed by the United Community Fund through the Social Planning Council was assigned to work with his group of transient men. C.U.R.E.S. became a society under the Societies Act on April 1st. On April 7th the C.U.R.E.S. rehabilitation project, a restaurant, with community living quarters upstairs, was established. The restaurant was closed down August 2nd. A key leader had to leave the Society and shortly thereafter the other members of the society dispersed.
- C.U.R.E.S. - "Suggested Rehabilitation Program for Transients", mimeographed, Edmonton, April 10, 1968.
- C.U.R.E.S. - "Survey on Problems of Rehabilitation", mimeographed, Edmonton, September, 1968.
- Fr. Marc Barrier, Oblate Fathers, C.U.R.E.S. "Classification Proposal", mimeographed, Edmonton, undated.
- April 10: A meeting of the agencies, both private and government, which provided services to the transient man was called in the Boyle Street Community Hall. At this meeting a brief prepared by C.U.R.E.S. regarding a classification centre and a rehabilitation project was presented.
- 1968: Summer, Three subsequent meetings with the major agencies providing services to transient men were held to consider closer collaboration in the provision of such services as clothing distribution, job placement, and general information.
- 1968: July 5, At the suggestion of Mr. J. E. Oberholtzer, Director, Human Resources Development Authority, a Study Committee on the Single, Unemployed Man in Edmonton, comprising personnel from voluntary and government agencies in the Boyle Street area, began working on a brief dealing with job opportunities, employability and classification. The final report from this committee entitled "A Dream of Things That Never Were", was presented to the Director of the Human Resources Development Authority in October, 1968. Appended to this document were the C.U.R.E.S. "Suggested Rehabilitation Program for Transients", Edmonton, April 10th and Fr. Marc Barrier's, "Classification Proposal", undated.
- Fall-1968: The activities of social agency personnel in the Boyle Street area increased. The Social Planning Council took on staff a detached worker to improve liaison between that agency and the recipients of social services in the Boyle Street area.
- Annon., "Development of Human Resources and the Single, Unemployed Man in Edmonton", Fall, 1968.

1969: February, A number of agencies collaborated in establishing the Overnight Shelter Society, to provide emergency shelter to men who could not get into either the Salvation Army or the Provincial Single Men's Hostel. This Society was disbanded when the Edmonton Day Centre took over the Overnight Emergency Shelter service on November 1, 1969. During the winter of 1969-70 this facility accommodated an average of 30-50 men nightly. This rose to around 80 during the spring season and has settled down around 65 per night through the summer of 1970.

Overnight Shelter, "Annual Report", October 27, 1969.

Overnight Shelter, "Daily Records", February, 1969 to present.

1969: May 15, A document written by a detached worker which provided invaluable insight into the social conditions in the Boyle Street area was sent to the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

John McNamara, "The Defectors, A Report and Social Essay to the President of the Social Planning Council", Burwash, Ontario, May 15, 1969.

Summer-1969: The Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Medicine became involved in the Boyle Street area. The Student Health Involvement Plan (SHIP) medical clinic was established at the Edmonton Day Centre. SHIP now employs a full time nurse. The Student Legal Services Project established offices in the Edmonton Day Centre and the Edmonton Native Brotherhood Society. Both these projects are in operation on a year round basis. Both projects are staffed by students with faculty supervision.

1969: October, A skid row medical clinic was opened at 10620 - 97th Street. This clinic started up as an extension of the services offered to skid row alcoholics and drug addicts through Project Recovery. At present it is operated separately from Project Recovery.

Edmonton Journal, January 20, 1970

Edmonton Journal, May 7, 1970

Edmonton Journal, May 4, 1970

1969: November, The Canadian Broadcasting Company began making a film of the Boyle Street area. This film has been shown on "Dimension At Seven", C.B.C., Channel 5, Edmonton.

The City Centre Co-operative Club prepared a brief on housing conditions which was submitted to the Social Planning Council.

City Centre Co-op Club, "Committee on Housing Conditions for Single Men in the City of Edmonton", November 27, 1969.

1969: December, the Social Planning Council secured approval from the United Community Fund to take an action-study approach to community involvement.

"Some comments for U.C.F. from Edmonton Social Planning Council, Re: Study of Boyle Street Agencies", a mimeograph, December, 1969.

Fall &
Winter
1969-70:

As a consequence a number of alleged incidents of brutality at the Single Men's Hostel, the Human Rights Association of Alberta started an investigation. Publicity arising out of this investigation prompted the Minister of Social Development to appoint Supreme Court Justice Michael O'Byrne to review the operations of the hostel and the alleged mistreatment of men staying there. A public inquiry was held February 9-11, 1970 at the Edmonton Court House. Among the presentations made to the inquiry were briefs from the Human Rights Association and the Edmonton Social Planning Council. Charges laid against the Minister of Social Development concerning the alleged brutality are still pending.

The report and recommendations from Mr. Justice O'Byrne's inquiry were issued May 7, 1970.

Edmonton Journal, January 26, 1970, January 29, 1970, February 4, 1970, February 9, 1970, February 10, 1970, February 13, 1970, and May 8, 1970.

Spring-1970:

Futures Society was founded by a group of inmates and ex-inmates from Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol. Future is working with other organizations such as John Howard Society, Edmonton Social Planning Council and departments of government to assist ex-inmates to find jobs, housing and so forth. Rehabilitation and upgrading programs are promoted both inside and outside of the institution.

Edmonton Journal, April 24, 1970.

1970: March, 'Rally sponsored by City Centre Co-operative Club'. Single unemployed men gathered on Sir Winston Churchill Square to appeal for co-operation between the unemployed and employers. The rally was attended by around 50 men.

Edmonton Journal, March 23, 1970.

1970: March 26, the Edmonton Social Planning Council submitted a report to the United Community Fund regarding the services to single unattached men in the Boyle Street area.

Edmonton Social Planning Council, "The Plight of the Homeless Man", mimeograph, undated.

1970: May, Liesure Consultants, a Toronto based firm, was awarded a contract through the Mayor's Committee on Human Resource Development to carry out a study on the co-ordination of social services in the City of Edmonton. The report from this team of consultants is due in September, 1970.

Reports and correspondence with City of Edmonton, City Social Services Department.

Report of the Mayor's Committee on Human Resources, "Developing Edmonton's Human Resources", Edmonton, May, 1968.

The City of Edmonton "Human Resource Development Study Request for a Proposal", Edmonton, December 23, 1969.

1970: June, the Minister of Social Development issued a request for proposal (RFP) for the contracting of the present services offered by the Provincial Single Men's Hostel. A meeting of the agencies and businesses interested in the RFP was held June 26. A meeting between interested parties and a group of single men was held June 28 at the Marian Centre. The last date of response to this RFP is August 10, 1970.

Request For Proposal, Provincial Single Men's Hostel, Department of Social Development, Edmonton, Alberta.

Edmonton Journal, June 18, 1970

Edmonton Journal, June 19, 1970

Edmonton Journal, June 30, 1970

Other References:

1. Edmonton Social Planning Council, "Interim Report - Boyle Street Project", October 23, 1969.
2. Edmonton Day Centre, "Brief to Advisory Board, City of Edmonton Parks and Recreation Department", undated.
3. Edmonton Day Centre, "A Transient's Day", undated.
4. Edmonton Social Planning Council "Some Comments for U.C.F. from Edmonton Social Planning Council, Re: Study of Boyle Street Agencies", December, 1969.

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